

MISSION PLAN FOR THE THEOLOGY OF WORK PROJECT, INC.

A THESIS-PROJECT

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MISSION PLAN FOR THE THEOLOGY OF WORK PROJECT, INC.

Abstract

This thesis presents a mission plan for the Theology of Work Project, Inc., to develop and disseminate a biblical theology of work, applicable to workplaces around the world, acceptable across the spectrum of orthodox/historical Christianity. It characterizes a primary market of writers, teachers and researchers and a secondary market workplace Christians. It begins with Creation and New Creation and elucidates research approaches including Exegetical, Key Topics, and Contextualized Processes to be conducted by leaders in biblical studies, theology and ethics, economics and organizational science, business practice, and workplace ministry. It develops leadership and governance structures, timelines, budgets and financial plans.

INTRODUCTION

What follows is a mission plan for the Theology of Work Project, Inc (also referred to here as “the Project”). It is essentially the same as a business plan, minus a business plan’s most important section — how we’re going to make money. We won’t. The Project is a non-profit corporation dedicated to the mission of creating a foundational Christian theology of work. Like other non-profits, we believe our mission is worth doing for its own sake, even though it won’t make money. We plan to offer our product free of charge, and we won’t have revenues or profits. With that exception, what follows is a basic business plan, with the familiar sections: mission, market, product, leadership, timeline, finance, and conclusions.

CHAPTER 1. MISSION

Vision

Most people spend a lot of their lives working. If God is Lord of all then surely God must be the Lord of work. But most Christians don't see their faith as a vital element of their work, so they miss much of the blessing and satisfaction that work should offer. And they also miss opportunities to bring the redemptive power of Christ into their workplaces and into society as a whole.

Take a computer salesman, for example. Every good salesman in a business with repeat customers knows what it means to be a servant. If you serve your customers, they come back. If you don't, they don't. But do Christian salespeople know that as they serve customers, they are also serving the Lord? (Col. 3:17) Do they invest time to know and love their customers as beings created in the image of God? Do they recognize that honesty and integrity are as important on a sales call as they are in a small group meeting? When a customer gets a new system online, does the computer salesperson feel the satisfaction of knowing that their work has lasting — even eternal — significance?

Do machinists in a gear factory know that God delights in the beauty of good brass work? (Ex. 35:30-34) Do they know that God cares more about how they treat their co-workers than about how much of their paycheck they put in the collection plate? Do nurses recognize nursing — the healing work itself — as an occupation of Jesus, the Great Physician? Do hotel cleaning supervisors see how Jesus treated poor people with a sense of dignity that others missed — and then go and do likewise? Does a biotech Board of

Directors know that applying the Ten Commandments to an impending layoff decision is not only highly ethical, but also best management practice?¹ When Christians face difficult decisions at work, do they think of turning to the Bible for help, or expecting useful guidance from the church?

Do non-Christians say, “I’m glad my boss is a Christian, because I know she will always treat me fairly and put my interests above her own?” Does society say it wishes businesses made more decisions by following the way of Jesus?

The Theology of Work Project envisions a time when the answer to all these questions is routinely, “yes.” Our role is to develop a foundational theology of work and to disseminate it, in partnership with faith-work organizations and with churches, widely enough to reach workplace Christians across the world.

Mission

In pursuit of this vision, the Project’s mission is to develop a basic Christian theology of work that will serve as a scaffold for researchers, writers, teachers and others to build upon. In turn, they will produce books, papers, curricula, magazines, courses, seminars, sermons, workshops and other materials and events for workers. Using these resources, workers can perceive God’s purpose, meaning, and value in their work, and bring Christ’s redeeming power into the fabric of their workplaces.

¹ Stephen A. Hill, "The Application of Christian Ethics to the Problem of Downsizing in the United States Biotechnology Industry," M.A.R. thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2007).

This mission is intentionally indirect. The Project's mission is to develop the underlying theology and disseminate it to workplace ministries, individuals, and churches who have resources and channels in place to educate, train and equip individual Christians. These groups can reach workplace Christians more effectively than we can. What they aren't equipped to do is to develop a biblically-robust, practical, widely-accepted theology of work.

Objectives

To achieve this mission the project has set the following goals:

- To assemble a Steering Committee of the most able members of its key constituencies, namely biblical scholars, theologians, ethicists, economists and organizational scientists, workers, and workplace ministers;
- To produce a statement (referred to herein as the *Theology of Work*) that is as broadly acceptable as possible, being relevant for every kind of workplace around the world, and meeting the approval of the full spectrum of traditions within the orthodox/historical Christian faith.
- To disseminate the *Theology of Work* as widely as possible, to reach the millions of people who may benefit from it.

CHAPTER 2. MARKET

In order to develop and disseminate a theology of work that actually makes a difference in people's lives, we have to know who the market is and how to reach it. Specifically, we need to identify our primary and secondary markets, define their needs, and develop channels to reach them.

Identifying the market

The Project's primary market is researchers, writers, teachers and others (such as some pastors) who develop faith-work integration materials for workers in non-church-related workplaces. We estimate this market to consist of between 1000 and 3000 people in the United States, and another 1000 to 3000 elsewhere.² Although this is a small number of people, they are the front lines for equipping people to apply the Christian faith to the workplace. The fact that it is a small marketplace means that the project will be able to develop individual relationships with a significant fraction of the people who shape the field's direction. In other words, this marketplace can be addressed by personal, interactive communication, rather than depending on impersonal, mass media.

There are also several secondary markets. One is researchers, writers, and teachers in fields such as economics, organizational sciences, management, government, and law who are seeking to engage Christian theology. Another, similar, academic market is researcher/writer/teachers in traditional Christian disciplines—such as biblical

² For details, see Appendix A, "Market Estimates."

studies, theology, preaching, pastoral care, and missions—who seek to gain a theological perspective on the workplace. We have not attempted to estimate the size of these academic markets because we have not found a way to identify who might have a significant workplace interest in this arena.

Workplace Christians themselves also constitute a secondary market. We intend that they will be able access the *Theology of Work* directly, if they choose. (We will not try to reach workplace Christians by circumventing the Project’s primary market of faith-work researchers/writers/teachers, but we will try to avoid technical terms, assumptions, and references that would put the *Theology of Work* beyond the reach of ordinary Christians who possess a solid biblical/theological background.) We estimate that this market comprises about one million people in the United States actively trying to apply the Christian faith to their work, and about one million more elsewhere. (Since we are planning to write in English, our market estimates include only English speakers.) Beyond this active secondary market, we estimate that there is an inactive, or potential, market consisting of all Christians in the orthodox/historical traditions who work in non-church-related organizations. We estimate this market to be 40-50 million people in the US, and another 40-50 million elsewhere.

Incidentally, we may find a market among people of other faiths — or no faith — wishing to understand the workplace from a Christian perspective. We have not attempted to estimate this market’s size, and we are not planning to attempt to specifically meet its needs, since it plays little role in helping achieve the Project’s vision. Nonetheless we would be delighted to be helpful to people in this category.

Defining the market's needs

Is there an unmet need?

In recent years hundreds of books, papers, curricula, magazines, courses, seminars and other materials have been produced to reach this market.³ Many of them are excellent, and hundreds of thousands of people have used them to help apply the Christian faith to the workplace. Yet, even so, the faith-work literature could better fulfill the market's needs if it were a more mutually- coherent body of work. At present, most people in the field work individually at widely scattered organizations, with the result that books sometimes seem episodic or idiosyncratic, rather than reflecting the work of a community of discourse. We don't desire or expect that writers will ever all agree about the multitude of sub-topics in the field. Challenging debate and diverse points of view are healthy for any field of discourse. But we think there is a deep need for a foundational theology of work, built from a variety of perspectives, that could highlight common ground and inspire continuous dialog. Our field could be more coherent without having to become monochromatic.

For example, to what degree should Christians talk to co-workers about Jesus? Some books say that a Christian's primary role in the workplace is to evangelize co-workers.⁴ In contrast, others say that Christian workers' primary task is to perform their

³ Hammond, Stevens and Svanoe list over 800 titles, 204-215

⁴See for example, Bob Jacks and Matthew Jacks with Pam Mellskog, *Divine Appointments* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2002).

jobs excellently and ethically.⁵ Both of these perspectives are important, and the field could benefit from bringing researchers, writers and teachers together to mutually explore how these perspectives relate to each other. Christians in the workplace — and those who equip them — would be well-served by a well-developed, shared theological foundation for the field. The Project is not striving for uniformity, but for common language, mutual discourse, and broad engagement, so that workplace Christians can build a coherent understanding as they assimilate various perspectives. A broadly-based, well-researched, theology of work could help create a shared footing for applying the Christian faith to the workplace.

Can a theology of work meet the need?

The Project intends to bring together some of the best researchers, writers and teachers in the field to develop such a common footing and a worldwide community of discourse. It does not intend to meet the markets' needs on its own but to develop theological resources and perspectives to assist the thousands of people already working in the field. That is, instead of trying to produce a better book for workers, the Project will produce a solid theological framework for researchers, writers and teachers. With that in hand, they in turn can produce biblically-grounded, theologically sound, mutually-coherent materials to better meet the market's needs. We respect these writers' creativity, insight, and skill, and we know that only they can effectively reach the myriad market

⁵ See for example, Tom Chappell, *The Soul of a Business: Managing for Profit and the Common Good* (New York: Bantam, 1993).

segments they serve. The researchers, writers, teachers and others are the Project's primary market.

In general they know their distinctive market segments well. They do a good job of reaching into their respective segments' specific contexts, using language their audiences understand, and providing down-to-earth applications. However, many of them lack a solid theological foundation, especially many of the business-people-turned-writers. They may have a good grasp of how the Bible applies to their own market niche, but may fall short when writing for others. The head of a family-owned business in a labor-intensive industry may have done well by avoiding debt, for instance, and there are passages in the Bible that caution against debt. This may lead such a person to write a book claiming that Godly business people must avoid all debt. But this prescription may not always be theologically sound or practically feasible in other industries. Jesus told several stories that praised business people for using debt wisely (Matt. 25:14-30). And if government contractors refused to use debt while waiting for the Treasury Department's checks to arrive, they probably couldn't pay their workers more than a few times a year. Personal experience is no substitute for good theology, and the lack of a good theology of work keeps many books from serving the faith-work market adequately.

Some of the books in the faith-work market are written by pastors. They may understand general theological concepts but have trouble applying them accurately to the workplace. As an example, consider the topic of vocation. Vocation is a well-developed subject in church theology, and most pastors have a personal sense of their own calling. This may mislead them into writing that all Christians are called to do at work what the pastor feels called to do at church — witnessing, studying the Bible, praying, exhorting

the faithful. But a book about how to lead a workplace Bible study would capture only a fraction of what it means to follow Christ on the job.

Theologians and other academics may also have difficulty writing for workplace Christians. Traditional theological categories are difficult to apply to work. As a case in point, sometimes sermons, talks or theological publications seem to equate greed (a theological category) with profit (a business category). But they are not identical. Greed is always an affront to God, but profit can serve as a measure of how much value an organization has added to the world. When it comes to even more subtle business concepts, such as performance planning, price elasticity, net present value analysis, and servant leadership, it is ever harder to offer genuinely useful guidance.

Of course there are many business people, pastors, theologians and others who have addressed the workplace with skill, precision, and insight. The bibliography highlights some of the best books in the field. Yet even much of the best writing is conducted in isolation. Writers in the faith-work field could benefit from a well-formed community of discourse that routinely reads and critiques each other's work, and from a widely-accepted, biblically-based, foundational theology of work.

Does the market recognize the need?

To explore whether there is a perceived need for a theology of work, the Project's co-chairs sent letters to 150 people prominent in the faith-work field. Some of them were from the Project's primary market, and others from the various secondary markets. Each one was asked to respond with ten questions he or she thought the Project should answer, and to nominate up to three people to work on the Project. The co-chairs received 132 replies (an 88% response rate), containing about 600 questions and 53 nominations.

(Most of the nominees were named by more than one respondent.) This was a highly encouraging set of responses. See the appendices for the text of the letter of inquiry, the names of people contacted and the questions received in reply.

The authors of many of the best books in the field were among those contacted. In one sense, they might be expected to see little need for the Project. Their work is already theologically well-grounded. Yet they were among the Project's most enthusiastic supporters. They agreed that a deeper, broader, more systematic theological foundation would greatly benefit the field. Likewise, a large majority of teachers and business people contacted enthusiastically supported the project.

Virtually everyone agreed that there is a deep need for a solid theology of work. However, a few were skeptical that the Project would have the necessary breadth of geographic, ethnic, cultural, economic and theological representation to fulfill its mission. Such responses strengthened the Project's commitment to widen its representation and avoid getting trapped in sectarian theological disputes. We are confident the Project will overcome these very legitimate concerns.

Can we meet the entire market's needs?

This leads us to address the question of representation directly. Although the Project was started by a small ad hoc committee of white, English-speaking men with executive/professional work experience living in the Boston area, it aims to serve users of all races, cultures, ethnicities and both sexes around the world. To do so, it needs to accurately understand the perspectives and needs of all its intended markets. The ad hoc committee quickly realized it would be hopeless for them as a tiny, unrepresentative group to accurately speak for the entire market. Therefore, rather than running the Project

themselves, they decided to turn it over to a Steering Committee selected to represent the market more accurately. Crucial dimensions of representation include:

- men and women
- people from around the world and across the multiplicity of the world's cultures and ethnic groups
- workers at every level of the socio-economic-educational spectrum
- members from across the breadth of traditions within orthodox/historical Christian theology

With members from across these dimensions, the Project expects to incorporate their perspectives in each phase of its work. We cannot hope to fully represent everyone, everywhere. But, of course, we will strive to achieve as broad a representation as possible. Above all, we must remain humble about our work, hoping that others will critique, expand, and adapt the *Theology of Work* for markets it doesn't serve adequately on its own.

Market Channels

To fulfill the Project's mission, we need to disseminate the *Theology of Work* on a large scale. We plan to do so by working with key individuals and by partnering with relevant organizations.

Individuals

We were surprised and encouraged by the enthusiastic response from the 150 leaders contacted by the co-chairs. Clearly they are eager to see the *Theology of Work* come into being. This gave us a powerful idea for disseminating it—invite as many

skilled, influential, and articulate people as possible to join the Project. They will develop a sense of ownership that leads them to become the vanguard in disseminating the Project's results. Accordingly, we have structured operations so that over the course of its work, the Project will involve more and more participants.

To keep the initial work manageable, we will begin with a Steering Committee of 15 aided by a Council of Advisors totaling about 35. Together, they will produce a draft to be deliberated by a Theology of Work Committee of about 100 additional members, composed of the leading potential adopters and disseminators. The Theology of Work Committee will meet to approve the final text, and in doing so they will become an engaged, active body of the people most able to spread the *Theology of Work* deeply into the market.

Partner organizations

We plan to engage faith-work organizations in adopting and disseminating the Project's results. As we have noted, there are at least 1000 such organizations in existence. As far as we can tell, none of them are developing their own theologies, so there is little danger of competitive friction. Instead they are engaged in operational activities such as building audiences, getting into workplaces and churches, and offering seminars and workshops. Prominent among these organizations are the Coalition for Ministry in Daily Life, the International Coalition of Workplace Ministries, Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, Laity Lodge, the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, Marketplace Network, Inc., and the Yale Center for Faith and Culture.

a. *Coalition for Ministry in Daily Life*

The Coalition for Ministry in Daily Life (“CMDL”) publishes a quarterly newsletter called *LayNet* and runs an annual “consultation” devoted to encouraging Christians to “continue Christ’s ministry in daily life.”⁶ CMDL deliberately works to include evangelical and mainline Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Eastern Orthodox constituents. Typical attendance at the consultations is not large — 100 to 200 people⁷ -- but CMDL has been in operation for almost 20 years and has attracted prominent members including Paul Minus and Pete Hammond. Several members of the Theology of Work Project’s Steering Committee are listed as “Individual Partners” on the CMDL website, so significant informal relations already exist with CMDL. In addition, we plan to participate actively in CMDL’s annual consultation.

b. *International Coalition of Workplace Ministries*

The International Coalition of Workplace Ministries (“ICWM”) provides resources, information and networking opportunities to other organizations seeking to transform the workplace for Christ. ICWM serves primarily to network “like-minded organizations who support the mission and purpose of ICWM.”⁸ It lists more than 1000 such organizations in its directory. Its Director is Os Hillman, who has indicated a great interest in the Project. A number of the Project’s members have relationships with Mr. Hillman, and we anticipate that ICWM will help make others aware of the Project.

⁶ Coalition for Ministry in Daily Life, March 1, 2007 <www.dailylifeministry.org>.

⁷ Author’s in-person observation at the Coalition for Ministry in Daily Life Annual Consultation, held at Yale Divinity School, New Haven, CT, April 2, 2005.

⁸ International Coalition of Workplace Ministries. *About Us*. March 1, 2007 <www.icwm.net>.

c. *InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Professional School Ministry*

Although Intersity Christian Fellowship (“IVCF”) ministers primarily to students, it has played an active role in work-faith integration through its Graduate/Faculty division, especially its MBA ministry. Pete Hammond was for many years IVCF’s head of Marketplace ministries, and more recently John Terrill has served as the Director of Professional School Ministries. Several of the Project’s Steering Committee members enjoy close friendships with these and other IVCF leaders.

The Project anticipates having the opportunity to partner with IVCF to help disseminate the *Theology of Work*. IVCF has often called on some of the members of the Project’s Steering Committee to lead faith-work conferences. The author served as the moderator of the IVCF-related G2 Leadership Conference at MIT in April 2006 and as the moderator of the concluding panel discussion of Business as Missions Track at IVCF’s Urbana 2007 conference. IVCF’s reach is considerable. It has 35,000 student members in the USA at 560 college and university campuses.⁹ Most impressively, its Business as Missions Track at Urbana 2007 was filled to capacity with 1200 registrants.

d. *Laity Lodge*

“Laity Lodge is dedicated to enabling Christians to know Jesus deeply and to serve him in the everyday places of their lives....”¹⁰ Its primary function is providing retreats, some of which aim to bring together Christian business leaders to discuss how to

⁹ Intersity Christian Fellowship/USA. *About Us*. March 1, 2007 <www.intersity.org/aboutus>.

¹⁰ Laity Lodge. *Welcome to Laity Lodge*. March 1, 2007 <www.icwm.net>.

apply their faith to their work. Steering Committee member Dave Williamson is the Director of Laity Lodge.

e. Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization

The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (“Lausanne”) is the major worldwide coordinating body in evangelical Christian missions. Its Marketplace Ministry Issue Group is dedicated to “helping the people of God to recover the calling, equipping and mobilization of every believer into ministry in their work place to practice and demonstrate service, witness and righteousness of the Kingdom of God in their relationships, responsibilities and leadership.” It explicitly includes the theology of work among its concerns. The President of the Lausanne Committee, Douglas Birdsall, has enthusiastically supported the Project’s work. Mr. Birdsall was among many persons who nominated Gordon Preece, Facilitator of the Lausanne’s Marketplace Ministry Issue Group to serve on the Theology of Work Project. Mr. Preece now serves on the Project’s Steering Committee. Alistair Mackenzie, another member of the Lausanne Marketplace Issue Group is also a member of the Project’s Steering Committee.

The Project greatly values the global connections provided by its relations with the Lausanne Committee. The decision to expand the Steering Committee to be more globally representative stems largely from the possibilities afforded by Lausanne connections.

f. Marketplace Network, Inc.

Marketplace Network, Inc. (“MNI”), is the leading faith-work integration organization in Boston and the surrounding area. A number of the Project’s leaders are members of MNI, including Haddon Robinson and Tom Phillips, who are both on MNI’s

Board of Directors. MNI's mission is "to motivate and equip Christians to apply faith to work."¹¹ MNI can serve as a model for many of the 1000 or so workplace ministries who form a major component of the Project's market. While MNI won't receive preferential treatment, it, along with similar organizations, may be a test bed for the Project's dissemination activities. We hope they will be an early adopter of the *Theology of Work* as they develop their own research, writing and teaching materials to serve their particular audience.

g. Yale Center for Faith and Culture

The Yale Center for Faith and Culture ("YCFC") has emerged as the most visible seminary-based faith-work integration center. It is a unit of Yale Divinity School. YCFC has five major sub-centers, including the Ethics and Spirituality in the Workplace ("ESW") program. The Center's Director, Dr. David Miller, enjoys a high reputation in the work-faith integration world, as does Yale Divinity School itself, both in evangelical and mainline circles. The ESW produces a wide range of workplace-oriented conferences and seminars. For example the program's major 2006-07 events include the National Conference on Workplace Chaplaincy, the Yale Christian Business Conference, the Twin Cities Leaders Offline CEO conference, and the Greenwich Leadership Forum.¹² As a partner, YFCF could provide an excellent market channel, and we hope to work closely with the YCFC in developing and disseminating the *Theology of Work*.

¹¹ Marketplace Network, Inc., *About Us*. March 30, 2007 <www.marketplacenetwork.com>.

¹² Yale Center for Faith and Culture, *Ethics and Spirituality in the Workplace*. March 2, 2007 <<http://www.yale.edu/faith/esw/index.htm>>.

Nearly all of the Steering Committee know Dr. Miller personally and have expressed high regard for him. Regrettably, due to other commitments, he was unable to serve on the Steering Committee as of January 2007.

Relations with partner and other organizations

The Theology of Work Project does not compete with any of the key faith-work organizations described above. As far as we know, the Project does not compete with any organizations anywhere in the world. Nonetheless, there are organizational sensitivities. For instance, a number of the 150 people contacted by the co-chairs said they were concerned that the Project might try to usurp the role of existing groups. However, when the Project's mission was explained to them fully, their fears were allayed.

Others worried that the Project might affiliate with one organization, to the detriment of the others. Similarly, some were concerned that the Project might unfairly favor Marketplace Network, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary or Harvard Business School because all the Project's initial ad hoc committees had ties with one or more of these three institutions. The Project is committed to work as an independent entity, however, and we will seek to make this clear at every opportunity.

In short, we believe that the Project is uniquely positioned to accomplish its mission while contributing to — rather than interfering with — the missions of other organizations in the field. The Project is working on an element — theology — that is crucial for the work-faith field, but does not compete with other organizations. So it is natural for the Project to form partnerships — formal or informal, but not exclusive — with other organizations.

Structurally the Project accomplishes this by including members of other organizations in its own membership, while avoiding excessive representation from any one organization. These members serve strictly as individuals, yet provide valuable connections between the Project and the organizations to which they belong. We have already begun communicating regularly with the other organizations in the field, and we believe the level of cooperation will continue to grow.

CHAPTER 3. PRODUCT

The Project's chief product is the *Theology of Work*. We, like other non-profit organizations, believe that our product serves a purpose beyond simply meeting the market's perceived needs. We believe that workplace Christians need a theology of work, whether they know it or not. Therefore our product development starts, not by analyzing what the market wants, but by discovering what the Bible says about work, whether directly or indirectly. In addition, our product is an *applied* theology of work. Thus, besides understanding the Bible, we also have to understand the contemporary workplace in enough detail to be useful to our market. Otherwise our product won't deserve to be adopted by workplace Christians and the researchers, writers, and teachers who serve them.

In short, the *Theology of Work* must be biblical, and it must be practical. To meet these twin requirements, we have developed six criteria to guide our work, as well as three approaches to carry it out. We believe these criteria and approaches integrate rigorous biblical research with practical workplace application.

To help ensure that our product actually reaches the market, we are already preparing for large-scale dissemination of the *Theology of Work*. Building dissemination activities into our product development plan will give us the best chance of making the transition from producing a good theological product to transforming the workplace for Christ.

Biblical basis for the *Theology of Work*

Work is enormously important to most people, including most Christians. How could it not be? The average North American worker spends 88,000 hours of his or her life at work, whether paid or unpaid¹³. That's more than any other use of time, far more than the 4000 hours the average Christian spends at church. Yet, although work is important to workplace Christians, most Christians don't believe their work is important to God. As one student said after an event at Harvard Business School, "As long as I don't cheat, steal or lie, I don't think God cares what I do for a living." Unless workplace Christians believe God cares about their work, and unless they find help for applying their faith to their work, most Christians' work will remain disconnected from any Christ-like influence.

An effective remedy for this disconnect requires a basic practical theology of work, a biblical perspective on how to apply the Christian faith to the workplace. This raises two key questions. Does the Bible actually say anything significant about work? Can Christians agree on what it says?

Does the Bible say anything significant about work?

Work is a prominent topic in Scripture. In fact, the Bible begins with work. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1). And God's work is really *work* — God works so hard at creation that he takes a rest afterwards (Gen. 2:2-3).

¹³ R. Paul Stevens, *Doing God's Business* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 88.

Then God gets back to work. As Jesus said, “My Father is still working, and I also am working” (John 5:17).¹⁴

Amazingly, God also creates men and women to be workers like himself.

God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” (Gen. 1:27-28)

On purpose, God leaves the creation unfinished so that people can bring it to fruition.

No plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground....The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it....So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. (Gen. 2:5, 15, 19-20)

God invites — requires— people to work because their work produces results that bring the world closer to what God intends it to become. That is, God designed human work to serve as an *instrument* to produce useful results.

Moreover, the Bible points out that humans are meant to live in community, not in isolation.

Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.” So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept;

¹⁴ All scripture passages NRSV.

then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken.” Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed. (Gen. 2:18-25)

Work builds a community of *relationships* among people and between people and God.

God intends people to work alongside him. “They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze” (Gen. 3:8). Here again, humans mirror God’s image, because God — as the three-in-one — does not work alone, but works in community even within himself.

Work in the Garden of Eden had lasting — even *eternal* — significance. God accepted the products of human creativity into God’s own creation, when he gives the man authority to give things their true names (Gen. 2:19, see above), and from then onward, human labor leaves a lasting impression on the universe.

In Genesis 1 and 2, therefore, we see three essential aspects — *instrumental*, *relational*, and *eternal* — that together define God’s essential design for work.¹⁵ Work is an instrument for producing something of value. Work is an occasion for building relationships. And work is eternally meaningful in its own right.

In the ideal world of Genesis 1 and 2, work is the chief activity of life. Work appears on every page of these chapters. In comparison, worship is never mentioned. The activities we now know as worship — praising God, feeling his presence, building a God-

¹⁵ Darrell Cosden, *A Theology of Work: Work and the New Creation* (Carlisle, Cumbria, UK: Paternoster Press, 2004, 177-187).

centered community — are a natural part of work in Genesis 1 and 2. This, of course, is different from how people experience work and worship now.

That difference comes from the Fall. Humans disobeyed the limits God set (Gen. 3:6), and they broke their community with God and each other (Gen. 3:10-13). Because of this, work becomes fallen, or cursed.

To the man God said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” (Genesis 3:17-19)

In the Fall we see a breaking of work’s instrumental aspect (the ground yielding thistles where grain was intended) and its eternal aspect (work and workers returning to dust).

Likewise work’s relational value becomes distorted.

To the woman God said, “I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.” (Genesis 3:16)

Life’s most intimate relationships —between husbands and wives, between parents and children — take on painful and unjust dimensions. Furthermore, relationships between people and the rest of God’s creation become strained or broken. People are at enmity with animals and at odds with the environment (Gen. 3:15, 17-19).

Yet in the midst of the curses, God’s blessing remains. Human life continues and grows. Eve becomes known as “the mother of all living” (Gen 3:20). God keeps blessing people with the resources they need, such as sunshine and rain (Matt. 5:45), despite the curse. In the aftermath of the Fall, God does not abandon people, but instead works harder than ever, seeking always to redeem fallen humans and the fallen world. Having

cast them out of the garden and its fair climate, God makes clothes for the man and woman (Gen. 3:21) to protect them in their new, hostile environment. In short, work becomes toilsome and frustrating, but under God's continued providence, work retains its instrumental, relational, and ontological value.

From the Fall onward, the Bible is the story of God's redeeming acts for people and the world. In the Old Testament, God works chiefly through Israel, intending through them to redeem the whole world. "I am coming to gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come and see my glory," says the Lord (Is. 66:18, see also Gen. 12:3, Is. 2:2). In the Gospels, Christ's life, death, and resurrection bring God's work of redemption to perfection. And in the rest of the New Testament, the world's redemption in Christ is brought to realization at last in the God's New Heaven/New Earth, where once again all nations are blessed. God restores the fullness of his creation, even lifting the ban on eating from the tree of life, now planted in the midst of the New Jerusalem, where "the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations" (Rev. 22:2). In the New Heaven/New Earth human creation also reaches its eternal fulfillment — not annihilation — for "people will bring into it the glory and honor of the nations" (Rev. 21:26).

N.T. Wright describes the Bible's movements as a play in five acts: Creation, Fall, Israel, Christ, and the church age leading to the New Creation.¹⁶ Work remains a vital, Godly element of life in each movement of the biblical story. God continues to work as a laborer, builder/architect (Prov. 8:27-31), doctor-healer (Mark 21:12,17), teacher (Matt. 7:28-29), weaver (Ps. 139:13-16), gardener/farmer (John 15:1-8), shepherd

¹⁶ N.T. Wright, "How Can the Bible Be Authoritative?" *Vox Evangelica* 21 (1991), 7–32.

(Ps. 23, John 10), potter/craftworker (Jer. 18:1-9, Rom 9:19-21) and homemaker (Luke 15:8). The work of God includes

making, adorning, separating, organizing, cultivating, beautifying, improving, fixing, redeeming, renovating, informing, announcing, revealing outcomes, healing breaches, making peace, helping, sustaining, being with, communicating worth, celebrating, expressing joy, making beautiful things, imagining, dealing with evil, designing, planning, enlisting, empowering, consummating, entertaining, welcoming, providing a context, showing hospitality, serving, and bringing to a conclusion.¹⁷

The Bible describes God's work after the fall in a profusion of occupations. Work doesn't cease to be valuable to God after the Fall. It actually becomes more valuable to God.

Indeed, much of the Bible is devoted to guiding people about how to work in a fallen world. Exactly *how much* of the Bible is devoted to work is one of the key questions the Project is designed to answer. For the present, consider a few examples:

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the Lord your God. (Leviticus 19:9-10)

You shall not cheat in measuring length, weight, or quantity. You shall have honest balances, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. (Leviticus 19:35-36)

You shall pay laborers their wages daily before sunset, because they are poor and their livelihood depends on them; otherwise they might cry to the Lord against you, and you would incur guilt. (Deuteronomy 24:15)

They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. (Isaiah 65:21-22)

¹⁷ R. Paul Stevens, *The Other Six Days* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 118.

Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything, not only while being watched and in order to please them, but wholeheartedly, fearing the Lord. Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters, since you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you serve the Lord Christ. For the wrongdoer will be paid back for whatever wrong has been done, and there is no partiality. Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, for you know that you also have a Master in heaven. (Colossians 3:22-4:1)

Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ (Matthew 25:34-36)

In light of these examples, it’s strange that Christians believe their work doesn’t matter to God. People certainly didn’t get this idea from reading the Bible. Probably it was the church that convinced Christians that work doesn’t matter to God. Work is a non-topic in most churches.

In many cases churches intentionally downplay the value of work, following a logic that goes like this: If you lived before Christ, your work may have been genuinely important to God. But now that Christ has lived, died and been raised to life, the only truly important task for Christians is to spread the word about him. Compared to that, work is of minor importance in God’s eyes. True, work is necessary as long as we are in the world, but strive to minimize work and maximize your time evangelizing. Perhaps God will even favor you with a special call to “full time ministry” as an evangelist or missionary.

Of course, evangelizing is an important task for every follower of Jesus (Matt. 28:19). But there is no biblical reason to believe that evangelizing means ceasing to work. Often, work provides the ideal situation for evangelizing. This makes sense given the

relational aspect of work — work is where some of the deepest relationships form. But the evangelistic opportunity evaporates if the work becomes *merely* an occasion for evangelizing. And work, as work, remains a godly endeavor, even when it is not an occasion for evangelism (2 Thess. 3:10). Nothing in the New Testament diminishes the instrumental and eternal value of work. For example Jesus uses workplaces for 17 of the 23 illustrations of the Kingdom recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. The Kingdom of God is like farming (13:24, 31), baking bread (13:33), digging for treasure (13:44), trading pearls (13:45), fishing (13:47), managing a business (13:52), accounting (18:23), laboring (20:1), investment banking (25:14-30). By comparison, Jesus never compares the Kingdom to the temple, the synagogue, or religious activity. Work, as work, is no less valuable to God in the New Testament than in the Old.

So we see that work matters deeply to God in the creation, in the midst of the fall, in God's redemptive work begun in Israel, and in his redemptive work perfected in Christ. Does work still matter to God at the End, in the New Creation? Yes.

Darrell Cosden explores the eternal value of work in his book *The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work*. Work in the New Creation is like work in the Garden, but better. The New Creation is not a nature-centered glade, but a human-centered city, and the products of human creativity are gloriously incorporated into the very fabric of paradise. Work, like life, doesn't cease in eternity, it is transformed. In Cosden's words

Salvation, the new creation, includes and preserves — but is also much more (through transformation) than the garden ever was....God is at home and creation is released to live the life, human and non-human, that God had always

envisioned for it. It is a true place of community where creation itself is included in the life-giving relationships of the triune God.¹⁸

Developing the *Theology of Work*

Based on our analysis of Creation and New Creation, we concluded that there is indeed an opportunity to develop a coherent, biblical, practical theology of work. Our next step was to devise a work plan for the Project. We first agreed on a set of six criteria to guide the research and writing. Next, we developed three complementary approaches to pursue alongside each other. Then we settled on a process for researching, writing, editing, testing, revising, and adopting the text. Finally, we developed a process for making decisions in situations in which we do not come to a unanimous consensus.

Criteria for the Theology of Work

The Theology of Work Project's mission is to develop a robust, practical, widely-accepted Christian statement, to be called the *Theology of Work*. Towards this end, the Steering Committee set six criteria for the *Theology of Work* to fulfill. It must be

1. rooted in the entire Bible, rather than only isolated texts;
2. timeless, or universal, in the sense of elucidating truths about work that apply in all situations, and do not depend on the particularities of the work, the workers, or the context;

¹⁸ Darrell Cosden, *The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 76-77.

3. timely, or relevant, in the sense of leading to answers to the myriad questions that arise in actual workplace situations, which do depend greatly on the particularities of the work, the workers, and the context;
4. understandable to all of its intended audiences without using specialized theological knowledge;
5. as broadly acceptable as possible, without departing from orthodox/historic Christian theology; and
6. engaged with the major published works in the theology of work, whether in agreement or disagreement at various points.

The first criterion is that the Project be rooted in the entire Bible, rather than in isolated texts. The Bible is structured as the story of God's salvation, beginning with creation, and moving through the Fall, Israel, Christ, and ending with the church era leading to the New Heaven/New Earth. Every text must be understood in accordance with how it fits into this master story encompassing the whole of Scripture.

This prevents the Project from developing a limited perspective based on only a few texts. For example, based solely on Matthew 28:19-20 (the Great Commission), it might seem that the only value of work is that it provides access to people for evangelism. But as we have seen, other texts such as Genesis 2:15 show that work also has value in its own right, because God chose to include human beings in the work of finishing Creation. The Project is committed to making proper use of the whole of Scripture.

Furthermore, many workplace questions are not addressed by particular biblical texts, so you have to look to the whole of Scripture for answers. No text in the Bible, for example, addresses whether men and women may work together on offshore oil platforms. To answer this question, you must search for indirect biblical sources. There may be passages that address a different topic, but are applicable to the topic at hand. Exodus 20:14 addresses the topic of adultery (don't do it!), without any mention of offshore oil rigs. Yet it might apply to whether (or how) men and women should work and live together over long periods in isolated locations. If a working situation is likely to lead people towards adultery, the situation should be avoided, or the risk mitigated. In addition there is the overall story of the Bible. Men and women were created to work together (Gen 2:20-22), but since the Fall both men and women work under the curse of sin (Gen. 3:16-19). In the history of Israel, God at times appointed different roles for men and women (e.g., Jeremiah 51:30), yet in Christ there is neither male nor female (Gal. 3:28). At the end, in the New Heaven/New Earth, many sex differences become meaningless (Matt 22:30). All of these elements of the Bible's story must be brought to bear on the question at hand. Together, all these passages — and maybe others — can be melded to create a biblical perspective on the question of men and women working together on offshore oil platforms.

The second criterion, timeless, or universal, recognizes that much of what the Bible has to say about work does not depend on the particular circumstances of the work, the workers, or the context in which they work. Take the question, "Does God call people to work and/or to particular kinds of work or jobs?" This question could be asked at any time in history, by people in any culture, and receive the same answer in each case. Note

that this is not a particular question such as, “Is God calling me to be a software engineer?” but a general question of whether God ever calls people to a particular kind of work. Answers to major theological questions such as this are needed because they come up again and again. There’s little value in addressing specific cases unless you have addressed universal principles.

The third criterion, timely, or relevant, reflects the Project’s goal to help meet the needs of actual workers, whether directly or indirectly. Timely, relevant, theological processes are needed to address questions as they arise for people working in the field. For example take the question, “Which features should be included in this widget that we are developing?” This question is important if you are a product developer, yet finding a Christian perspective on the question can be difficult. No passage in Scripture appears to speak directly about product development or about widgets. Neither do traditional theological topics, such as avarice, creativity, fairness, sin, or love of neighbor. Therefore, we need to provide processes that working Christians can use to identify, interpret and apply biblical and theological material to specific situations.

The fourth criterion is that the *Theology of Work* should be understandable without requiring specialized theological terms. It should be understandable to all the Project’s audiences, not only to the primary audience of researchers, writers, and teachers. We believe we can employ rigorous, professional scholarship, and still present it in plain language.

The fifth criterion is to be as broadly acceptable as possible, without departing from orthodox Christian theology. This reflects the crucial need for Christians to speak

with a harmonious voice in the workplace, with respect to workplace-related issues. If Christians can work together to bring the redemptive work of Christ to workplace situations, imagine how benefit they could be to their co-workers and companies.

The final criterion is to make use of the major published works in the theology of work. Theology of any kind proceeds most effectively when writers engage the strengths and weaknesses of previous works, expecting in turn to be engaged by later writers. At present the theology of work hasn't had much of this kind of dialogue. Unless the dialogue is increased, the field of the theology of work will remain immature and ineffective. Thus, the Project intends to enter into careful dialogue with the best work already done by others. We hope that the Project, in turn, will catalyze a vigorous, ongoing community of discourse lasting long after we publish the *Theology of Work*.

Approaches to the Theology of Work

The Project will conduct its work through three approaches, termed Exegetical, Key Topics, and Contextualized Processes. Most of the results produced by the Exegetical and the Key Topic approaches will have widespread application and universal, unchanging validity. For example, research on Genesis 3 may lead us to conclude that all legitimate work between the Fall and the New Creation is suffused with God's presence, as well as marred by sin. Such a conclusion is universal in the sense that it does not depend on circumstances of particular work or workers. It is also constant or "timeless" in the sense that its validity does not change over time. The Exegetical and Key Topics approaches together are expected to lead to a relatively compact foundational theology of work, with an emphasis on the timeless, universal aspect of the Project's criteria.

In contrast, the Contextualized Processes approach will develop processes or methods for people to find answers to their own questions arising in the workplace. A working Christian will face thousands of particular decisions in the course of a career. Consider, for example, the question of what to do if a product is found to be defective. This question is not answered directly by the Bible, nor is it one of the Project's Key Topics. Yet it comes up in the workplace from time to time, and the Christian faith should provide a perspective. Should the manufacturer remove the product from the market immediately, offer to replace units if they fail, repair every unit in the field, or something else? Surely the answer will depend on the product — a defective infant car seat is different from a defective doormat. The Contextualized Process approach will produce a set of processes so people can confidently discover situation-specific answers for themselves.

a. Exegetical approach

In the Exegetical approach, the Bible is divided into a number of segments. Each section is assigned to a researcher/writer, who reads the section closely and catalogs every passage that might contribute significantly to the theology of work. The catalog will need to keep track of several kinds of passages: those that contribute directly to the theology of work, those that contribute indirectly, and those that provide important background for the theology of work. Colossians 4:22-5:1 (about slaves and masters), as an example, contains direct instructions pertaining to at least one kind of workplace. By comparison, Colossians 3:1-2 ("Seek the things that are above") doesn't refer to work at all, but its perspective on what is eternally valuable may contribute indirectly to the theology of work. Going deeper, throughout Colossians you see the apostles exercising

an authority-yet-equality within the Christians community, and this attitude may be relevant for the theology of workplace leadership.

Project members or advisors with extensive training and experience in biblical scholarship play a key role in each segment of the Exegetical approach. Biblical passages relevant to work are usually outcroppings of a deeper stratum of bedrock, to which they are inextricably conjoined. A trained, experienced biblical scholar knows where the bedrock lies. At the same time, people with extensive workplace experience will also be included in each segment of the work. Sometimes only a person with workplace-adapted eyes can recognize the work-related aspects of the text. In some cases an individual researcher/writer may have both outstanding biblical skills and extensive workplace experience. In other cases, assignments may be given to a pair of researcher/writers, or writers may receive assistance from advisors or editors.

In any case, those assigned to the Exegetical approach will make extensive use of biblical commentaries, systematic theologies, historic statements of faith, and the theology of work literature as they select and interpret the texts. We expect to conduct most of the Exegetical work early in the Project, so that the results can feed into the work of the Key Topics and Contextualized Process approaches

b. Key Topics approach

Besides the Exegetical approach, the Project will also address Key Topics arising in the workplace. For example, a Key Topic might be, “Does God call people to work and/or to particular kinds of work or jobs?” a question asked by millions of Christian

workers every day. Based on over 600 questions received from the Project's letters to leaders in the faith/work field (see Appendix D), we developed 20 Key Topics:

1. What is the purpose and meaning of work? Does work have lasting value?
2. Are some kinds of work more valuable than others? How should the goodness/success of work and/or its results be measured?
3. Does God call people to work and/or to particular kinds of work or jobs? Does God provide guidance to people in their work, and if so how?
4. How should work (and the worker) relate to other elements of life, such as family, church, and society? Does this answer depend on the sex of the worker, and if so, how?
5. How should work be organized in society? What duties do the various parties in economic life owe to each other? Are some economic systems better than others?
6. How should workers be compensated for their work?
7. What expectations should workers have about God's provision of the economic necessities and/or luxuries of life? How should Christians relate to money and wealth and to consumption, saving, and generosity?
8. How should Christians understand globalization and international trade and transnational organizations? What should Christians do about economic dislocation and exploitation? What opportunities should Christians pursue in international development and relief through business and work?
9. How should Christians relate to others at work, and is there a distinction between relating to Christians vs. non-Christians? Under what circumstances should Christians work with non-Christians or avoid doing so? Should Christians make a distinction between relating to men and to women?
10. How should Christians relate to economically adversarial parties, e.g., competitors, buyers, and sellers? What, specifically, should Christians do with regard to lawsuits? Should the answers differ based on whether the other party is a Christian?
11. Are certain financial and economic arrangements preferred, allowed, discouraged, and/or forbidden by the Bible?
12. What should motivate Christians in their work? Is it proper to trust God and yet act vigorously at work, and if so, how should that be done?
13. What is the Christian view of truth and/or deception in work?

14. Are there particular ethical principles or practices that should distinguish Christians in their approach to work?
15. What are the spiritual dangers of work, and what are the spiritual disciplines for handling them, e.g., pride, envy, greed, lust?
16. How should Christians handle conflict in the workplace?
17. Is there a Christian approach to leadership, and if so, how does it differ from other approaches?
18. What is the role of rest in relation to work and life?
19. Should Christians seek to spread the Gospel via their work, and if so how?
20. How should the church equip its members (and others?) to live out the Christian faith in their work and/or workplace?

Each topic will be assigned to a researcher/writer, who conducts the basic research and drafts the corresponding section of the *Theology of Work*.

Researcher/writers working on Key Topics will make extensive use of books and articles in theology of work, business management and ethics literature, biblical commentaries, systematic theologies, and historic statements of faith. Because so many books and articles have been written touching on each of the Key Topics, the researcher/writers will have much material to guide — or misguide! — them. The most important part of their task may be sifting and weighing these materials in light of a fresh reading of the biblical passages relevant to their topic. We expect to work on most of the Key Topics in the middle of the Project's timeline so that the Key Topics researcher/writers can take advantage of results of the Exegetical approach, yet contribute to the Contextualized Processes approach. However, we will assign a few Key Topics early on, in order hone our ability to do genuinely practical theology. We recognize these early Key Topics may need to be revised later when more of the Exegetical results are available.

c. Contextualized Processes approach

We recognize that it would be impossible to analyze every possible workplace situation in advance and have a prefabricated answer to every question that arises in the workplace. Moreover, people in the workplace constantly face new, unforeseen questions, because new situations are always arising as workplaces evolve. Practical answers to workplace questions generally must take careful account of the context in which the questions arise. Therefore we plan to develop and disseminate one or more context-sensitive processes that workplace Christians can use on the spot to address questions as they arise in real-life situations. We term this the Contextualized Processes approach.

To understand the importance of this approach, think again about the question, “May men and women work together on offshore oil platforms, and if so under what conditions?” The answer may depend crucially on contextual issues such as what facilities are available, what social networks exist, and what cultural patterns the workers bring with them, as well as many other factors. The Contextualized Processes approach aims to give workers (and those who support them) one or more methods to find reliable, practical answers to questions that continually arise in the workplace. Specifically, we will develop models, frameworks, checklists, and/or methods that take the user step-by-step through the process of developing their own biblically-grounded, context-sensitive practical answer to any specific workplace issue.

We plan to develop these Contextualized Process towards the end of the Project’s work because we expect to observe, contemplate, and codify the processes we ourselves use to pursue the Exegetical and Key Topics approaches. We hope that our own

processes have something to offer others. In addition, there are a number of context-sensitive theological methods that have been developed and published by practical theologians in recent years, although we do not know yet whether any of the them can be adapted for the Project's purposes. It may be that researcher/writers assigned to the Contextualized Processes approach will be able to combine the Project's own internal approaches with the externally-developed one. Alternatively they may need to develop entirely new methods instead. We expect this to become clearer as the Project progresses

Researcher/writers in the Contextualized Processes approach will make use of theological methods and theology of work literature, systematic theologies, and books and articles by workplace Christians, and will try to learn from groups already engaged in similar processes in other fields.

Working methods

Within each of the three approaches, the research and writing is divided into pieces. Each piece will be assigned to an individual — or possibly a team — who will conduct research and write a draft of the assigned piece, then send their draft to the Writing Director. (The Writing Director is the Project's staff member responsible for coordinating the development of the *Theology of Work*, as is explained more fully below.) The Exegetical pieces will each consist of a segment of the Bible, either a book, part of a book, or multiple short books. The Key Topics pieces will each consist of a single Key Topic. We do not know yet how the Contextualized Processes approach will be pieced out.

The researcher/writer assigned to each piece will have about three months to do the research and write a first draft. Every researcher/writer will identify the appropriate material in the Bible and consult the major commentaries and theological works in the field. Then he or she will write a draft that meets the Project's six criteria. Each research/writing assignment may go to a Steering Committee member or to someone outside the Project, depending on the skills, expertise, and enthusiasm needed to produce the best possible draft. In order to attract and motivate the most qualified researcher/writers, the Project will offer a meaningful stipend for each piece.

The researcher/writers will send their drafts to the Writing Director, who will review and edit each piece, with attention to the project's six criteria. At any point, the Writing Director — or other members of the Steering Committee — may consult outside advisors, who collectively are termed the Advisory Council.

The Writing Director will then send the edited drafts back to the members of the Steering Committee. About twice a year the Steering Committee will convene to rigorously review, discuss, and, if necessary, amend the draft of each piece. During these meetings, we may divide into smaller working teams, to streamline the process. However, each Steering Committee member will have a chance to review and comment on every piece.

Based on the Steering Committee's deliberations, the Writing Director will further edit each piece and continuously assemble the pieces as they are completed. Ultimately, the Writing Director will work with a small writing team to integrate all the pieces into the draft *Theology of Work* .

When all the pieces are in place, the Writing Director will send the draft *Theology of Work* to every member of the Theology of Work Committee, requesting written comments at least one month prior to the final editorial meeting of the Steering Committee. As much as possible, the Writing Director will respond to these comments individually, but the most important comments and concerns will be discussed among the entire Steering Committee. Based on these discussions, the Writing Director will produce a second draft of the *Theology of Work*. This draft will be sent to the Theology of Work Committee in preparation for a Final Editorial Conference of the *Theology of Work*. At this in-person meeting, Theology of Work Committee will discuss and decide any final amendments to the text. The outcome of this Conference is the final *Theology of Work*.

Resolving conflicts

It seems likely that Project members will disagree at times about assumptions, methods, interpretations, conclusions, and other aspects of the Project's work. For example, members working on different segments of the Bible may draw conflicting conclusions. Likewise members pursuing the various Key Topics may develop answers that conflict with one another. Conflict is also likely in the development of the Contextualized Processes.

We have every hope that prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, will lead the Project members to consensus on much of the work. Nonetheless, the Steering Committee decided in January 2007 that where consensus cannot be reached, decisions will be made by majority rule, after thoughtful listening, respectful debate, and heartfelt prayer. Even so, from time to time we may need to record significant dissenting opinions,

and the final *Theology of Work* will sometimes contain sidebars offering alternative viewpoints. We regard this as a strength, rather than a weakness, as long as it does not undermine the unity needed to engage the wider world effectively.

Publication

The Project expects to publish the *Theology of Work* as an Internet wiki and a book. (A wiki is an interactive website that allows people to post comments and suggest expansions.) We believe the wiki will have the greater impact because it will let readers engage the work creatively, by making comments and proposing changes. We hope some readers will expand the work by researching and writing additional Topics and Contextualized Processes. Moreover, the world of publication is changing rapidly as the Internet supplants many traditional channels of distribution, and we anticipate this will open additional publication venues.

Disseminating the Theology of Work

In any case, the Project won't leave dissemination of the *Theology of Work* to chance. The Project's organizational structure, timeline, and funding inherently prepares for dissemination. One whole year is allotted to a large-scale dissemination program, both on our own and in conjunction with partner organizations. We expect to offer seminars and to make presentations at major gatherings, to publish articles in scholarly and popular journals, and to work individually with researchers, writers, teachers and workplace ministry organizations.. We will try seek out and engage people who haven't participated much in faith-work integrations: such as economists, churches and denominations, ethnic minorities, and non-managerial/professional workers. In order to pave the way for these

activities, the Project is beginning to attend meetings, forge personal contacts, and involve potential partner organizations.

CHAPTER 4. LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Given its ambitious mission, the Theology of Work Project needs experienced, capable leaders. They must define the Project's goals wisely and lead its activities effectively. The Project's audiences have to trust the leaders' motives and their theological acumen and practical vision. The leaders must inspire confidence from donors. They must be well-known and respected enough to attract project members, advisors, and disseminators from the Project's multi-faceted worldwide constituencies. From the beginning, we recognized we had two such leaders in Haddon Robinson and Tom Phillips. Under their leadership, the Project recruited a strong, capable Steering Committee to guide the Project to completion.

Key leaders

Haddon Robinson and Tom Phillips instigated the conversations that ultimately led to founding the Project. At the first exploratory meeting, they were unanimously selected to lead the Project, and the Project was born because of their enthusiastic acceptance. To get things going, they sent letters to 150 leading figures in the faith-work field, requesting nominations to serve on the Project's Standing Committee. Fifty-three people were nominated by this process, with most names repeated by several nominators. From this group, the co-chairs and ad hoc committee invited ten people to form an initial Steering Committee. The Steering Committee assumed authority for the Project in January 2007. At its first meeting, the Steering Committee voted to expand its membership to 15 members, in order to incorporate greater global, cultural, ethnic, and workplace diversity. In particular, we have an acute need to include women on the

Steering Committee. This expansion is still in process, so at present, the Project's key leaders are the co-chairs and the initial Steering Committee members.

Co-chairs

The Project has been led since its inception by co-chairs Haddon Robinson and Tom Phillips. Dr. Robinson is also president of the Project.

Haddon Robinson combines executive experience with theological acumen and communications excellence. His executive experience arises from his 12 years as president of Denver Seminary and 16 years as director of the Doctor of Ministry program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. His appointment as the Harold John Ockenga Distinguished Professor at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary shows that his scholarship is highly regarded. But more than this, he is a pioneer in applying the Bible to the workplace. He is the only non-physician ever to serve as General Director of the Christian Medical and Dental Society (1970-79), where he honed his ability to apply the Scripture to real-life situations outside the church. In 2000 he launched the world's first — and to date only — Doctor of Ministry program for the non-church workplace. He has served on the board of directors of Marketplace Network since its inception in the 1990s. His excellence in communication is widely known, for instance through *Discover the Word* (formerly *Radio Bible Class*) and his selection as one of the twelve most influential preachers in the English language by a Baylor University poll published in *Newsweek* magazine in 1996. Dr. Robinson also serves as a fellow and senior editor of *Christianity Today*.

As Steering Committee members were being invited to join, the Project realized that Dr. Robinson's reputation for integrity and personal warmth were even more

significant than his professional skills. Simply put, a majority of the Steering Committee members joined the Project chiefly because Dr. Robinson was its leader. In fact many people who responded to the Project's letters said they did so only because the letters came from Dr. Robinson and Mr. Phillips. Many of them believed that some organization should attempt the Project's mission. Most were convinced that the Theology of Work Project was the right organization to do it because Haddon Robinson was its co-chair.

Tom Phillips brings a similar reputation, originating in the business world rather than in academia. Mr. Phillips enjoys an unsurpassed reputation as an effective and ethical corporate leader, and also as a biblical/theological teacher. He served as president, CEO and chairman of Raytheon from 1964 to 1991. During this time Raytheon was consistently profitable, yet virtually alone among defense contractors in avoiding the unethical business practices which ultimately led to the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. Like Dr. Robinson, Mr. Phillips is a pioneer in the faith-work movement and a founding board member of Marketplace Network. He co-founded, and after 33 years still leads, a monthly gathering of businessmen, scholars, and clergy called First Tuesday. He teaches the seminar *Practical Faith in the Marketplace* at locations including Harvard Business School, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Northeastern University, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and Park Street Church.

Mr. Phillips' personal ethical commitment and long-term investment in the lives of others secured the commitment of many members and supporters of the Project. If people were impressed with Dr. Robinson's involvement, they were often convinced by Mr. Phillips'. He is, of course, well known as the person through whom the Holy Spirit led Chuck Colson to Christ — an event which occurred as a result of a business meeting

between the two men. Later, Colson said this: “I had to be impressed with the way this man ran his company in the equally competitive world of business: ignoring his enemies, trying to follow God's ways and not the often cutthroat ethics of corporate business.”¹⁹

We discovered that many others have quietly benefited from Mr. Phillips’ encouragement and ethical commitment, and were willing to join the Project because he was a co-chair.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee, under the leadership of the co-chairs, has complete responsibility for the Project. As a group it shapes the Project’s vision, represents the Project’s constituencies, oversees the Project’s work, and leads the dissemination of the Project’s results. Accordingly, the Steering Committee consists of the most able people the Project could identify, invited from around the world, representing five key constituencies, as indicated below.

a. Biblical Studies

Bill Hendricks has written or co-authored 17 books, including perhaps the best-known work in the field, *Your Work Matters to God*. which is required reading in virtually every faith-work class and seminar. It demonstrates Mr. Hendricks’ expertise in identifying biblical material relevant to the workplace, and applying it realistically to actual business situations. A graduate of Harvard College and Boston University, Mr. Hendricks earned his Master of Arts in Biblical Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary.

¹⁹ Charles W. Colson, *Born Again* (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 1967).

He is the founder and president of the Giftedness Center, a Dallas-based consulting firm specializing in organizational design and strategic people management. He is among the best-known figures in the worldwide field of faith-work integration.

Sean McDonough is an associate professor of New Testament at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Formerly he served as chair of the Biblical Studies Department of the Pacific Theological College in Suva, Fiji. He is a graduate of Harvard and Gordon-Conwell, and earned his Ph.D. at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland. His specialties are creation/cosmology and eschatology, both of which are crucial elements in the theology of work. Dr. McDonough brings business experience to his scholarship, having worked for several years for the management consulting firm, McKinsey & Company.

b. Theology and Ethics

Darrell Cosden published two of the most important recent books on the theology of work, *A Theology of Work: Work and the New Creation*, and *The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work*. He is a graduate of Bryan College and Denver Seminary and received his Ph.D. from St. Andrew's, Scotland. He recently joined the theology faculty of Judson College, Illinois, after several years teaching applied theology — including workplace theology — at the International Christian College, Glasgow. He is an adjunct lecturer at the University of South Africa and at the Schloss Mittersill Study Center in Austria. He has taught extensively in Russia and Ukraine and formerly served as the Academic Dean of Donetsk Christian University.

Alistair Mackenzie co-chairs the International Church Resourcing Task Force of the Marketplace Ministry Group of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization.

He is co-author of *Where's God on Monday?* and two other books on faith-work integration. Mr. Mackenzie pastored Baptist churches for 21 years and now teaches at the Bible College of New Zealand and serves as a national Consultant in faith and work with the Baptist Churches in New Zealand. He was formerly Coordinator of Servants for the mission agency, Asia's Urban Poor. After majoring in zoology as an undergraduate, Mr. Mackenzie received his Dip. Theol. (Melbourne) and his Bachelor of Divinity (Otago) and wrote his Master of Theology thesis on applying the theology of work to equipping Christians for life in the workplace. He grew up in his family's timber milling, manufacturing, and construction business in Christchurch.

Gordon Preece also grew up in a family business. He studied social work and theology and served as a youth worker and pastor in Sydney, Australia. He was a member of the Education Program for Unemployed Youth and Work Ventures, which successfully incubated businesses and created youth-oriented jobs. He earned two masters degrees, then completed his doctorate on a Trinitarian theology of vocation at Fuller Seminary. He taught at Ridley College, University of Melbourne, leading the Centre for Applied Christian Ethics there, then returned to Sydney as the Director of the Macquarie Christian Studies Institute at Macquarie University. He also serves as a visiting lecturer in the School of Applied Finance and is an honorary associate in the Ancient History Department. Dr. Preece is a theological advisor to the Marketplace Ministry Group of the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization. He is vice-chair and editor for the Zadok Institute for Christianity and Society and works with Australian Marketplace Connections

c. Economics and Organizational Studies

Daniel Byrd is a professor of business strategy at Emory University. He previously taught at Stanford Business School and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He studies how organizational learning contributes to competitive advantage in business enterprises. He says his academic and personal life is guided by a central truth: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” Dr. Byrd graduated from Northwestern University and Harvard Business School and received his Ph. D from the University of Michigan.

d. Business Practice

Al Erisman is the Director of the Center for Integrity in Business at Seattle Pacific University, Seattle, where he also teaches business ethics. He is the founder and editor of *Ethix* magazine and is a sought-after speaker on business ethics at universities and businesses around the world, especially in Asia. Dr. Erisman worked for the Boeing Company for 32 years, most recently as the Director of R&D for computing and mathematics. He was one of Boeing’s inaugural class of Senior Technical Fellows. He received degrees in mathematics from Northern Illinois University and Iowa State University, where he earned his Ph. D. Dr. Erisman is the co-author of numerous books and journal articles in mathematics, computing, and other topics.

Bill Heatley is an Information Technology executive at Kaiser Permanente in California. He previously worked for TRW, Hilton Hotels, and WellPoint. He is currently completing a book on faith and work to be published by Navpress in 2007.

e. Workplace Ministry

Randy Kilgore is Senior Writer for Marketplace Network of Boston. He is the author of *Talking About God in the 21st Century Marketplace* and the editor of the three-volume series, *30 Moments Christians Face in the Workplace*. He previously worked in human resources for companies in commercial construction and in health care. After twenty years in human resources, he felt called to workplace ministry as a writer and chaplain, and studied at Covenant Theological Seminary and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, where he earned his Master of Divinity. He is also a graduate of Southwest Baptist University, where he earned degrees in political science and business administration.

Will Messenger is the Director of the Mockler Center for Faith and Ethics in the Workplace, a unit of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Along with Haddon Robinson, he founded and leads the Workplace Leadership and Business Ethics degree programs at Gordon-Conwell. He serves on the board of directors of ArQule, a biotechnology company. He previously worked for IBM, Goldman-Sachs, and McKinsey & Company, and served as chief operating officer of Advanced Metabolic Systems. He is an ordained minister in the Episcopal Church with parish experience in the Boston area. Mr. Messenger is a graduate of Case Western University, Harvard Business School and Boston University School of Theology.

Dave Williamson is a director of Laity Lodge, a unit of the H. E. Butt Foundation in Kerrville, Texas. He is a licensed marriage and family therapist and is ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA). He served as Counseling Minister of the Colonial Church of Edina, Minnesota, and as Pastor of Congregational care at First Presbyterian Church of

Hollywood, California. He wrote the books *Group Power*, *Opening Doors to the Job Market*, and *Unemployed, Unfulfilled*. Mr. Williamson is a graduate of the University of Minnesota, Fuller Theological Seminary, and Luther Theological Seminary, where he received his Doctor of Ministry degree.

Leadership structure

The Project's leaders have two crucial responsibilities: to govern the Project as faithful stewards of its resources, and to develop and disseminate its main product, the *Theology of Work*. Accordingly, the leadership structure has a vertical dimension (governing the organization) and a horizontal dimension (developing the product). The Steering Committee leads both of these dimensions, as shown in Figures 1 and 2.

Governance (vertical) dimension

Governing the Project requires many tasks, such as organizing meetings, creating a non-profit legal structure, raising funds, and keeping the Project moving on a day-to-day basis. For efficiency's sake, these tasks are divided among five small groups, each with a specific purpose. They are charted as a vertical column running from top to bottom in Figure 1.

Steering Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haddon Robinson, co-chair • Tom Phillips, co-chair • Bill Hendricks • Sean McDonough • Darrell Cosden • Alistair Mackenzie • Gordon Preece • Daniel Byrd • Al Erisman • Bill Heatley • Randy Kilgore • Will Messenger • David Williamson • <i>Additional member</i> • <i>Additional member</i> • <i>Additional member</i> • <i>Additional member</i>
Corporate Officers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President, Haddon Robinson • Treasurer, Caleb Loring • Secretary, Will Messenger
Executive Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haddon Robinson, chair • Bill Heatley • Randy Kilgore • Will Messenger • Gordon Preece
Funding Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Randy Kilgore • <i>Additional member</i> • <i>Additional member</i>
Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Director, Will Messenger (interim) • Administrative Director, Cheryl Kilgore (interim)

Fig. 1. Organizational Structure – Governance (Vertical) Dimension

The Steering Committee is shown at the top of the vertical dimension. It bears ultimate decision-making authority for all aspects of the Project; thus all the other governance units serve under its direction. At the head of the Steering Committee are the Project's co-chairs, Tom Phillips and Haddon Robinson.

Shown on the chart immediately below the Steering Committee are the corporate Officers. They fulfill the legal requirements for the Project to be incorporated as a non-profit entity under Massachusetts law and under section 501(c)3 of the US Internal Revenue Code. In addition, one of the Officers — the Treasurer — ensures that the Project's funds are properly accounted for and safely deposited. Donors need to have the particular confidence in the Treasurer, and the Project is fortunate to have Caleb Loring serving in this role. Although the Officers are the legal incorporators of the Project, they serve at the discretion of the Steering Committee, which has ultimate jurisdiction.

The Executive Committee is the next group down the chart. It serves in place of the Steering Committee between conferences, implements the Project's major decisions and makes its own minor decisions on a monthly basis. It is elected by the Steering Committee.

Next down the figure is the Funding Committee, which raises the funds needed for the Project. Its goal is to secure \$1 million in commitments by August 2007, and to raise the remaining funds thereafter.

Finally, the Project's staff executes the decisions of the committees and Officers. There are two staff members, the Writing Director and the Administrative Director. They are the Project's only employees. To maintain flexibility during startup, interim Directors were appointed to serve until the August 2007 Project meeting, after which permanent

Directors will be appointed. The Interim Writing Director is Will Messenger, and the Interim Administrative Director is Cheryl Kilgore.

The Writing Director proposes research and writing assignments, then coordinates the researcher/writers. The Writing Director edits their drafts, and works with the Steering Committee and ultimately the Writing Committee to integrate the drafts into the final *Theology of Work*. The Writing Director also serves as a spokesperson for the Project, under the direction of the Co-Chairs and the Steering Committee. He maintains relationships with the Project's constituencies, committees, officers, advisors, potential partners, and with the faith-work integration community at large. Besides editing the *Theology of Work*, he also writes meeting preparation documents, presentations, operational plans, bibliographies, and informational pieces for the web site.

The Administrative Director organizes the Project's operations. She arranges travel, lodging, food, and materials for the Project's meetings, maintains the web site, handles financial matters (under the supervision of the Treasurer), organizes committee meetings, provides all materials for the Officers, and publishes a monthly Project update.

Working (horizontal) dimension

In addition to governing the Project, the Steering Committee also leads the task of researching, writing, and disseminating the *Theology of Work*. Figure 2 depicts this as a left-to-right flow in the horizontal dimension, beginning with the Steering Committee at the far left.

The Steering Committee is well-qualified to lead the Project's research and writing. Its members were chosen both for their individual skill and experience and their ability to function as a cohesive team. Accordingly, they will lead (although not

necessarily conduct) the initial research and writing for each part of the *Theology of Work*.

Steering Committee	Advisory Council	Theology of Work Committee
<u>Biblical Studies</u> - Bill Hendricks - Sean McDonough -	Up to 35 members to be determined by the Steering Committee in accordance with needs and opportunities for individuals who have a particular expertise to contribute	Approximately 100 members to be determined by the Steering Committee, based on leadership in their constituencies and in the overall field of faith-work integration
<u>Systematic Theology and Ethics</u> - Darrell Cosden - Alistair Mackenzie - Gordon Preece		
<u>Economics and Organizational Science</u> - Daniel Byrd - -		
<u>Business Practice</u> - Al Erisman - Bill Heatley -		
<u>Workplace Ministry</u> - Randy Kilgore - Will Messenger - David Williamson		

Fig. 2. Organizational Structure — Horizontal (Working) Dimension

The Steering Committee forms the heart of the Project. Their skill, sensitivity, experience, breadth of perspective, and representation of their constituencies are crucial to the Project's success. Each time the Project meets, the Steering Committee will receive research/writing assignments, review drafts, propose changes, decide any contested points, and approve the text of each successive piece of the work. To keep meetings efficient, they will generally be divided into smaller working teams comprised of

members from each of the five key constituencies. Step-by-step, these working teams will produce the draft text of the *Theology of Work*, completing the Exegetical, Key Topics, and Contextualized Process approaches.

From time to time the Project will need people with skills and experience beyond those of the Steering Committee, so a council of Advisors will be formed. Advisors may be given research/writing assignments or may be appointed as editors for major sections of the Exegetical approach. They may be asked to help bring additional perspectives on the Key Topics or Contextualized Processes, as well. The Steering Committee has the authority to invite Advisors for any purpose, and we anticipate consulting about 35 Advisors over the course of the Project.

As the draft nears completion, the Theology of Work Committee will be formed. It will consist of about 100 people with the greatest ability to disseminate the Project's results widely. They will read and discuss each section of the text and propose, debate, and adopt any changes needed. The *Theology of Work* will become *their* theology of work, and they will provide avenues for taking it into their constituencies, organizations, and localities. The Project is presently gathering names for the Theology of Work Committee, but it will be many months before members are selected.

In summary, the Steering Committee, the Advisory Council, and the Theology of Work Committee will successively research, draft, edit, revise, approve, and disseminate the *Theology of Work*. Each stage requires a different mix of people and skills, and each group is invited because of their exceptional ability to contribute to the Project's success.

CHAPTER 5. TIMELINE

The Project plans to complete the *Theology of Work* by the middle of 2010, and to vigorously disseminate it during the following year. Allowing for contingencies, the entire Project is scheduled to finish by mid-2011. The major phases and dates are shown graphically in Figure 3.

Overall timeline

The timeline revolves around seven conferences. At the first conference, held in January 2007, the Project's mission, markets, theological approaches, operations, leadership, structure, and initial funding were decided. In addition, the first set of six research/writing assignments (Set A) were committed to Steering Committee members as a trial run. Lastly, the Steering Committee decided to expand its ranks to 15 members in order to broaden its diversity and skill base.

At conferences two through six, the Steering Committee will discuss, test, revise, and eventually approve the latest drafts of the research/writing assignments. The assignments will be conducted in four sequential sets, called Sets A, B, C, and D, respectively, beginning at 6-month intervals. (See Fig. 3 for details.) In total the sets include 30 sections of the Exegetical work, 20 Key Topics, and one or more Contextualized Processes. We expect the Exegetical work to weigh most heavily in the earlier sets, the Key Topics in the middle, and the Contextualized Processes at the end. Between conferences, the Writing Director will work with the researcher/writers, section editors (if any) and advisors appointed for particular pieces of the work.

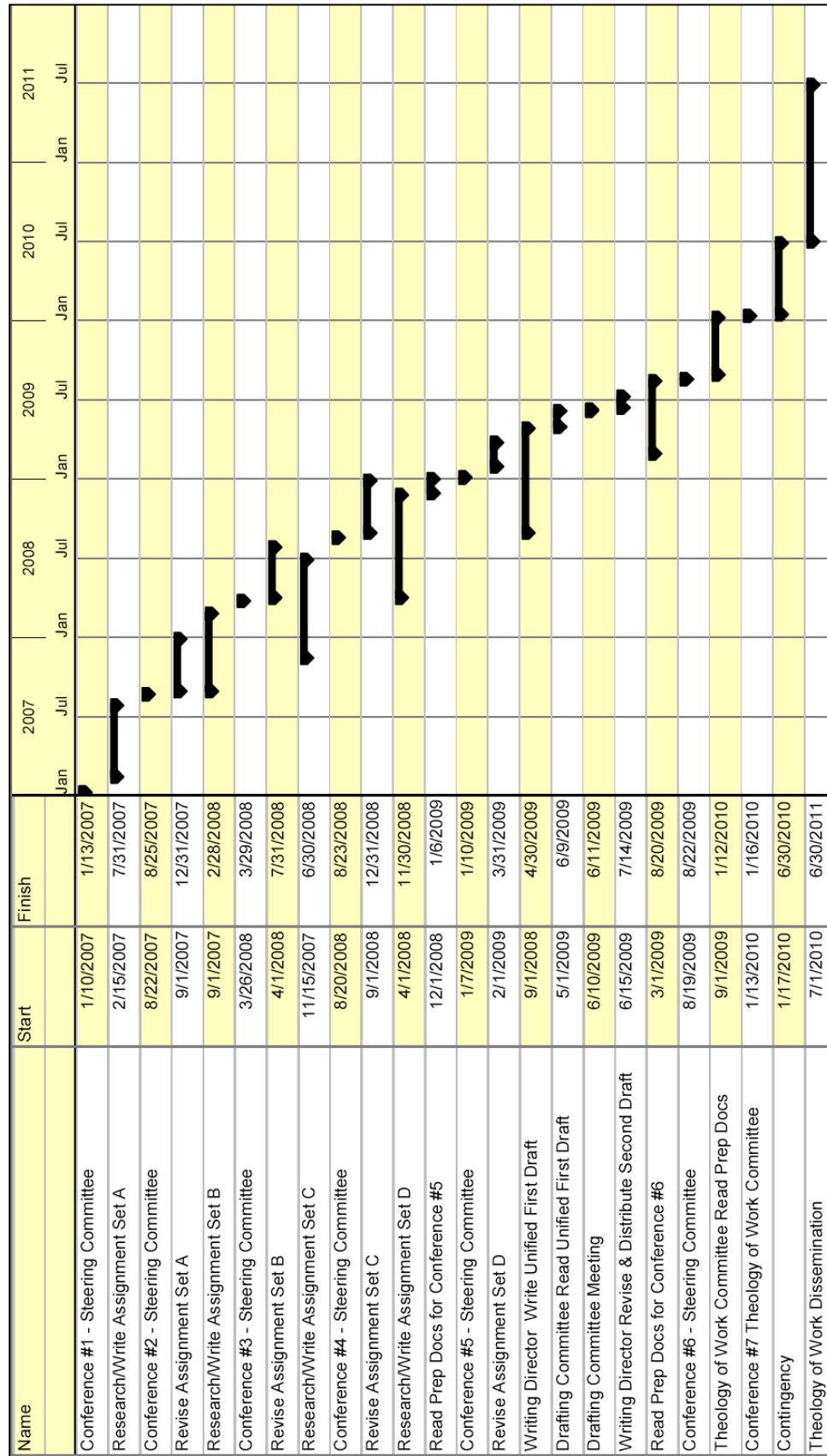


Fig. 3. Project Timeline

As each set is completed, the results will be tested by inviting market partners such as Marketplace Network, Gordon-Conwell, Yale Divinity School, Intervarsity Christian Fellowship and others to present or teach the findings, write articles, and otherwise make practical use of it. We will use their feedback to validate and improve the material. After this, the Writing Director, with the assistance of a small Writing Committee, will produce the Preliminary Draft of the *Theology of Work*.

The Project's seventh conference, in January 2010, will bring together the Theology of Work Committee of about 100 influencer/disseminators. This group will discuss, test, and presumably revise the text, resulting in the final *Theology of Work*. They will also initiate the dissemination activities. At this point the *Theology of Work* will be complete, and the dissemination process will begin. We are building in a contingency period of about 6 months through mid-2010, in case of unavoidable delays.

Beginning in mid-2010 a vigorous, one-year dissemination program is planned through mid-2011, roughly coinciding with the northern hemisphere academic year. Of course, many dissemination activities will take place in business, rather than academic, settings, as well as in the southern hemisphere.

The Project's existence after mid-2011 isn't decided yet. We may choose to commit the *Theology of Work* to another organization for ongoing development and support, assuming a suitable organization can be found. Alternatively, the Project may continue as an independent organization, or affiliate with an appropriate partner. We hope the Project will create a lively, ongoing community of discourse in the theology of work, and perhaps this community will want to support the Project in some new form going forward

Our primary mission is not to create a new organization, however, but to develop a theology of work. Therefore, at present, the Project is planning only for the next four-and-half years, with a commitment to release the *Theology of Work* by mid-2010, and — assuming success — a one-year dissemination program ending in mid-2011.

Achievements to date

From September 2005 to January 2007, the Project was simply a concept under exploration by an ad hoc committee headed by Haddon Robinson and Tom Phillips. As the ad hoc committee gradually worked out the concept's details, it recognized that effective research and development approaches and capable leadership would be the two critical ingredients needed for success. Could the Project formulate research and development approaches leading to a theology of work rigorous, yet practical, enough to help millions of people apply the Christian faith to their work? Contacts with the 150 or so faith-work leaders led us to conclude that the answer was yes, if we could attract the most capable and representative people to lead the Project and structure its operations to make effective use of their gifts and talents.

These ingredients met their first test when the initial Steering Committee arrived in Gloucester, Massachusetts, on January 10, 2007. The ad hoc committee had prepared proposals for the Project's mission, goals, leadership, operations, structure, and finances, and had raised just enough funding to get started. Would the newborn Steering Committee's members find each other as capable and attractive as the people who nominated them did? Would they get bogged down in disagreements about methods or denominationalism, or regional differences, or personality clashes? Would they commit

their enthusiasm and creativity to the Project? Would there be any takers for the first six writing assignments?

The first conference exceeded the Project's wildest hopes. In three days the Steering Committee bonded with each other in a way that seemed almost miraculous. We didn't get bogged down in disagreements, yet we quickly developed ways of turning healthy, mutually-challenging discussions into high-quality plans and decisions. We worked diligently, enthusiastically, and creatively to pilot the Exegetical and Key Topics approaches in a daylong session that validated their basic effectiveness, yet generated critical improvements. We stayed up late talking about how much fun we were having, and how to make the Project a success. Six members volunteered to take on the first six assignments.

Afterwards, several members wrote the co-chairs to express their enthusiasm about the Project.

Only God's blessing and the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts could have brought all that we accomplished into being. The goals of the Theology of Work projects are lofty but this last week confirmed for me that the divine hand of God is blessing the effort. How else could you account for the harmony and consensus we achieved?²⁰

For the past 30 years I have been thinking and praying about and working on the integration of faith and work. The Theology of Work Project struck me as something really special — the sort of thing one *has* to say yes to, not because it is convenient, but simply because it is the right thing to do. My point is that I consider this project worthy of my time, which is very, very dear to me.²¹

²⁰ William Heatley, personal correspondence with Haddon Robinson, Oak Park, CA, January 2007.

²¹ William Hendricks, personal correspondence with Haddon Robinson, Dallas, TX, January 17, 2007.

I found our first meeting very encouraging. And, to be honest, beyond my expectations. The healthy combination of academics and marketplace practitioners who demonstrated a commitment to speak the truth in a spirit of love produced a Steering Committee that I do have confidence will do an excellent job. And I am very confident that the agenda that has been set will give rise to the production of some very useful resources for the people and churches that I work with in New Zealand and elsewhere.²²

By every measure, the January 2007 conference launched the Project beyond the highest aspirations the co-chairs and their ad hoc committee had dared to hope.

In particular, we had dared to hope that the Steering Committee's diverse opinions would lead to a multi-part harmony, even though we were aware that theological conferences can be prone to disintegrating into a cacophony of competing voices. As it turned out, we didn't have to wait long to see theological harmony emerging ourselves. The Steering Committee included, by design, a wide range of theological traditions: Baptist, Reformed, charismatic, Anglican, independent, evangelical, mainline, and others. At the conference, members' distinct perspectives did indeed emerge, sometimes in pointed debates. Yet a deep harmony also began to emerge, nurtured by mutual respect and personal affection. We were able to settle on a definition of "work," set our theological criteria, adopt 20 Key Topics, and agree on processes for biblical research and application. If we were worried that we might hold irreconcilable theological positions, we instead discovered that our differences became a creative spur, and not a divisive dead end. We have no illusions that six years will pass without major disagreements. But we have seen that God's Word and his Spirit's grace puts us on

²² Alistair Mackenzie, personal correspondence with Haddon Robinson, Christchurch, New Zealand, January 24, 2007.

common ground in developing a faithful, practical theology of work. This is the most vital reason we believe the Project will succeed in accomplishing its mission.

Next steps

The Project's two most important next steps are to research, write, edit, test, revise, and adopt the first six pieces of the work, and to raise the money the Project needs. The research/writing assignments are in process, and the drafts will be edited, tested, and revised at the August 2007 conference. Fund raising is also under way, as discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 6. FINANCE

The Project aims to produce professional-quality results, and it aims to gather the most capable people from around the world. Both of these are expensive endeavors, and the Project's funding requirements are substantial. The only alternative, however, would be to reduce the Project to a small-scale, volunteer effort. Since this would be unlikely to have any deep, lasting, worldwide impact, the Steering Committee committed to raise the needed funds for the full-scale Project.

Funding required

To complete the *Theology of Work*, the Project will require approximately \$1.25 million from 2007 to mid-2010. Roughly another \$250,000 will be needed to fund the one-year intensive dissemination program from mid-2010 to mid-2011.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	TOTAL
Staff Total Cost of Employment\$	162,500	\$ 225,000	\$ 225,000	\$ 225,000	\$ 112,500	\$ 950,000
Research/Writer Stipends	15,000	67,500	42,500	-	-	\$ 125,000
Biblical Section Editor Stipends	-	10,000	7,500	-	-	\$ 17,500
Steering Committee Conferences	60,000	66,000	72,600	39,930	-	\$ 238,530
ToW Committee Conferences	-	-	-	50,000	-	\$ 50,000
Staff/committee travel	4,500	9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000	\$ 40,500
Advisor Stipends	2,000	4,000	12,000	12,000	4,000	\$ 34,000
Advisor Travel	1,000	3,000	9,000	9,000	3,000	\$ 25,000
Equipment & Supplies	10,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	\$ 30,000
Utilities	2,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	\$ 22,000
General & Administrative	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	\$ 25,000
TOTAL	\$ 262,000	\$ 399,500	\$ 392,600	\$ 359,930	\$ 143,500	\$ 1,557,530
Cumulative Expenditures	\$ 262,000	\$ 661,500	\$ 1,054,100	\$ 1,414,030	\$ 1,557,530	

Table 1. Funding Requirements

Staff compensation is the largest cost. The staff consists of the Interim Director and the Administrative Director. Besides staff compensation, stipends are also offered to research/writers, biblical section editors (if any), and certain advisors. Conference and travel expenses are another significant item. Equipment & supplies, utilities, and general and administrative costs make up the remainder of the Project's expenditures.

Funding sources

The Project seeks to receive \$1 million in commitments prior to the August 2007 conference to fully fund the Project's first three years. (Commitments may be fulfilled at the beginning or spread over three years.) An additional \$250,000 will be sought between 2008 and 2010. We plan to propose to a small group of donors the opportunity to fund the entire project. In this way, each donor will have the satisfaction of making a critical contribution to the Project's success. This will also reduce the Project's fundraising costs to nearly zero — an important benefit to many donors. The Project has received preliminary indications of interest from several people and has begun to make contacts.

A further \$250,000 required for dissemination will be sought in 2009 and 2010. We believe it is more appropriate to request funding for dissemination when the *Theology of Work* is nearly complete and the dissemination channels are better known.

Sustainability

Once the *Theology of Work* is published in book and Internet wiki forms, it won't need much additional funding to remain accessible to its audiences. The Project could continue as an independent, volunteer organization holding the copyright and maintaining the Internet site, or it could merge or partner with a larger institution. Alternately, the

Project could raise funding to remain active in the faith-work field at a high level. This might make sense if the Project catalyzes a sizable, active community of discourse needing a long-term focal point. For instance, the Project could establish a journal, expand the wiki, research and write additional Key Topics, support development of degree programs, or continue an intensive seminar program. We don't know now what opportunities there will be, so development of permanent funding seems premature. However the Project could be an excellent endowment opportunity for a donor looking to create a long-term legacy in the application of the Christian faith to the workplace. We will continue to be in touch with potential donors, trusting that God will move people to provide for whatever God ordains for the Project's long-term horizon.

CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSIONS

Work — ordinary, non-church work — matters to God, and it matters to God's people. Work matters to God because God created people to work under God and alongside each other to bring the Creation to fulfillment. Work matters to people because nearly everyone works, whether they're paid for it or not. Since the Fall, work has become tainted by sin, but it retains its eternal significance, for work continues into New Creation under Christ's redemption.

The Bible has much to say about work, as one might expect, given God's interest in the subject. Hundreds of passages relate to work directly, and an untold additional number relate indirectly. Both the Old Testament and the New depict work as a vital area of God's concern and a primary locus of human activity in the unfolding of Christ's redemption of the world.

For Christians, work is done as unto the Lord, or else it falls short of its proper place in the life of faith. At least a million workplace Christians are actively trying to apply the faith to their work. More than a thousand researchers, writers, and teachers are trying to help them. Yet this is only a fraction of the 42 million Christians in the workplace, most of whom haven't yet made a serious attempt to integrate their faith and their work. And these figures are for the United States alone. The rest of the world accessible to an English-language theology doubles these figures, at least.

To apply the Christian faith to the workplace, people need a good theology of work. Yet somehow, no one has seriously attempted to develop a robust, practical, widely-accepted, biblical theology of work. A few individuals have written books on the

subject, and many people and organizations have assumed they know what the Bible says about work, but nothing has achieved widespread acceptance, let alone practical impact.

The Theology of Work Project exists to fill this gap. We are gathering a highly qualified group of men and women from around the world, representing workers at every socio-economic level, and embodying the breadth of orthodox/historic Christianity to research, write, and disseminate a basic *Theology of Work* statement. We have identified the five key constituencies needed to develop it — biblical studies, theology and ethics, economics and organizational science, business practice, and workplace ministry. After consulting with some 150 leaders in the faith-work field, we have sought out the most qualified people from these constituencies, and formed a Steering Committee to govern the Project. This group will also conduct the work and discuss, test, revise, and ultimately concur on a unified draft. At the end, a 100-person Theology of Work Committee, composed of key leaders and influencers in the field, will also be invited to discuss, test, revise, and concur on the final *Theology of Work*. Once it meets their approval, they will become its champions around the world for adoption across the faith-work field. They will disseminate it by publishing a book, creating an Internet wiki, and holding seminars, classes, and other activities in conjunction with partners in the academic, non-profit, and business spheres.

To make a meaningful difference, the *Theology of Work* must be authentically biblical and genuinely practical. We are employing three simultaneous approaches to ensure that it is both. The Exegetical approach guides us in drawing on the whole Bible as our source, not merely isolated texts. The Key Topics approach enables us to apply the Bible to the most important situations in today's workplaces. And the Contextualized

Processes approach ensures that we give people practical methods to apply the Scriptures to the incredible variety of activities and decisions that occur in their own daily work. No theology we're aware of has ever attempted to take this kind of multi-faceted approach.

We have concrete plans to complete the *Theology of Work* by mid-2010, and disseminate it widely by mid-2011. Exceptionally capable leaders are in place, chaired by two of the best-regarded figures in — and beyond — the faith-work world: Haddon Robinson and Tom Phillips. The Theology of Work Project, Inc., has been chartered in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and recognized as a 501(c)3 charitable organization by the IRS. Two gifts totaling \$50,000 have gotten the Project started, allowing us to hold the first of the eight conferences and delegate the first six of 50 research/writing assignments.

Now we are undertaking the final steps to put the Project on a robust footing. The Steering Committee is inviting four additional members — with an urgent need to include women — to further expand its diversity and capability. Meanwhile, the Funding Committee is asking a few key supporters to jointly commit \$1 million by August 2007. We stand on the verge of what may be the most exciting workplace theology development of our time. With joy in our hearts, and confidence in the Spirit's power, we humbly commend the Theology of Work Project to all its markets, leaders, participants, donors, and friends, present and future. We fervently hope that in this — as in all things — God may be glorified, and the work of Christ's kingdom brought forward.

APPENDIX A. MARKET ESTIMATES

We estimate there is a primary market of between 1000 and 3000 people in the United States, and another 1000 to 3000 elsewhere. There is no precise way to determine these figures, but several approximate methods yield similar conclusions.

One method is to assume that when the Project sent letters to 150 faith-work leaders, it was reaching about five or ten percent of the primary market. This yields a US market of 1500 to 3000. Another method is to assume that each of the 1000 workplace ministry organizations listed in the International Coalition of Workplace Ministry's directory²³ has one or two researchers, writers or teachers. This yields a primary market of 1000 to 2000. Still another method is figure that about 20% of the primary market has published a book in the field to date. Given that there are roughly 800 items listed in the *Marketplace Annotated Bibliography*,²⁴ this yields a market size of 4000. Together these methods support a primary market estimate of about 1000 to 3000 in the United States. We expect the English-language, non-US market to be of comparable size. (All our market estimates consider only people proficient in the English language, since we plan to publish our results in English.)

The secondary markets consists of an active segment and a presently inactive segment. Consider first the active segment, that is, Christians actively seeking to integrate their faith and their work. No precise figures are available, but the we estimate there are about one million active secondary users in the United States and one million elsewhere.

This estimate is also derived using several methods. The first is based on sales of faith-work books. The bestsellers, such as John Beckett's *Loving Monday*, sell about 50,000 to 60,000 copies during the time they are in print.²⁵ Assuming this represents about 5% US market penetration, the result is roughly one million people actively buying books on faith-work integration. The second method assumes that each of the 1000 organizations listed by the International Coalition of Workplace Ministries (see above) has about 100 active members, and that only about 10% of the potential market belongs to one of these organizations. This also leads to a market estimate of about a million. The third method is to estimate that about 2% of the 42 million adult, committed-Christian

²³ International Coalition of Workplace Ministries. *About Us*. March 1, 2007 <www.icwm.net>.

²⁴ Pete Hammond, R. Paul Stevens, and Todd Svanoe, *The Marketplace Annotated Bibliography* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2002), 204-215.

²⁵ John Beckett, personal correspondence with the author, Cleveland, OH, March 28, 2007. *Loving Monday* is still in print and may sell somewhat more copies over time. Nonetheless its sales to date represent a useful basis for this method of estimation.

workers in the US²⁶ are actively trying to integrate their faith and work. This method also yields about a million people. None of these methods is decisive, but together they support an estimate that the active, secondary market is about one million. As with the primary market, we estimate that the active secondary market worldwide figure is double the US.

But the Project is not only interested in the market that is already active. Our vision is that all Christian workers would be helped by the *Theology of Work*, either directly or indirectly. The potential market therefore consists of the roughly 42 million active, committed Christians in the US workplace. Again, the worldwide figure is probably at least twice as high, yielding a total worldwide potential market approaching 100 million people.

²⁶ According to the Barna Group, there are 101 million born-again Christian adults in the US, about half of them evangelical. Together Barna's categories "born-again" and "evangelical" can serve as proxies for active Christians who believe that their faith should be applied to spheres of life beyond purely private devotion. Of these 66% are "committed," which we use as an estimate of those would apply their faith to their work under ideal circumstances. This makes 67 million people. (The Barna Group, "Born Again Christians," 2006, and "Faith Commitment," 2006, <<http://www.barna.org>>, February 19, 2007.) Applying the 63% overall participation rate in the US labor force (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Current Population Survey*. January 1 2007, February 19, 2007 <<http://www.bls.gov/cps/>>) yields an estimate of 42 million workers.

APPENDIX B. LETTER OF INQUIRY FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

Dear _____,

We want to invite you to be part of an important new initiative in the work/faitb movement: The development of a useful Theology of Work. We think you'll agree there's great importance to having a body of spiritual truth that supports the ministry of the millions of Christians who go to work every day. For centuries now, work has remained on the back burner of theological thinking, often making appearances only in negative references.

The goal of the project is to bring together a diverse group of theologians, academics in other related fields (management, economics, ethics, etc.), ministry leaders, business leaders, and practitioners to begin the process of developing a comprehensive Biblical theology of work. Enclosed you will find a project summary of this initiative.

For such a project to work, it must transcend ownership by any one group. Because of this, we are recommending the use of open source concepts that make the theology of work equally accessible and available to all users as they seek to serve working Christians. Further, it must have as its target those seeking to equip working Christians rather than working Christians themselves. As one leader put it, "there are three levels of research: (1) a theoretical understanding of the way the world works; (2) the application of this research in a way that trains pastors, teachers, churches and ministries to communicate the theory to others; and (3) the materials written with the end user in mind. We have in view for this project to develop a document that meets the needs of the second category, and from which all ministries (individual authors, workplace ministries, chaplaincy organizations, denominational bodies seeking to produce doctrinal or ministry statements, and in some cases individual churches developing workplace ministries, etc.) can develop materials to meet the needs described in the third category.

A two-page project summary is attached.

Here are some of the ways you can help:

First, would you be willing to share your view of the top ten (or fewer) questions that you believe a theology of work needs to answer? We want to understand the questions which most need to be addressed by a theology of work. Every ministry encounters a unique segment of the workforce, and the wider we cast our nets in gathering key questions, the greater the likelihood the document(s) that result will have widespread utility.

Second, would you send us the names of one to three people you think might be equipped to join the nationwide think tank group, and/or the smaller writing team? We eagerly seek your assistance, and look forward to your first wave of responses in the coming days. Please send your questions/suggestions on or before March 15, 2006, either electronically, or by mail to:

Respectfully,
Thomas L. Phillips
 Retired Chairman and CEO
 Raytheon Company

Haddon Robinson
 Author, Professor of Preaching
 Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

APPENDIX C. PEOPLE WHO RECEIVED LETTERS OF INQUIRY FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

The following are the names of 133 of the 150 people who received letters of inquiry from the co-chairs. (The names of the 17 others were not available to the author.) Of the 150 who received letters, 132 responded (88%). Because the Project did not ask permission to share individual responses, this list does not indicate which were the people who responded, meaning that the presence of a person's name on this list should not be taken as an endorsement of, or participation in, the Project.

Thomas Addington	Nancy Erisman	Max Lucado	David Roth
Akinfolami	Jack Fortin	Alistair Mackenzie	Mary Shahian
Akinrimisi	Verla Gillmor-	Bill Mancini	Geoff Shattuck
Brian Allenby	Wallace	John Maxwell	Doug Sherman
Dennis Bakke	Billy Graham	Alonzo L.	Ed Silvoso
Robert Banks	Franklin Graham	McDonald	David Smith
Don Barefoot	Steve Graves	Mark McDonald	Stephen Smith
Jerram Barrs	Mark Green	Gordon Macdonald	Doug Spada
John Beckett	Earl Grinols	Ralph Mattson	R. C. Sproul
Wendell Berry	Os Guinness	Sean McDonough	R. Paul Stevens
Henry Blackaby	Judith Gundry-Volf	Alistair McGrath	John Stott
Ken Blanchard	Prabhu Gupta	Russ McGuire	Gil Stricklin
Ron Blue	Brian Hall	Mike McLoughlin	Richard Swenson
Bob Buford	Pete Hammond	Mac McQuiston	John Terrill
Howard Butt	Eugene Heacock	William Messenger	Jim Tonkowich
Daniel Byrd	William Heatley	David Miller	Miroslav Volf
Joseph P. Carson	Bill Hendricks	Kevin Miller	Michael Volkema
Bryan Chapell	Howard Hendricks	Andrew Mills	Mary Wachtel
Buddy Childress	Alec Hill	Paul Minus	Rick Warren
David Chrzan	Os Hillman	Duane Moyer	Andrew
Raymond Clothier	Kent Humphreys	Jack Munday	Wasynczuk
Chuck Colson	Bill Hybels	Laura Nash	Mary Whelchel
Denton Cormany	Kathleen Jackson	Mark Noll	David Wells
Darrell Cosden	Buck Jacobs	Patrick O'Neal	Bruce Wilkinson
Doug Cozad	David Jones	John Ortberg	Dallas Willard
Drew Crandall	Tim Keller	Mim Pain	Paul Williams
Mark Cress	Jim Kennedy	Dennis Peacocke	David Williamson
Russ Crosson	Randy Kilgore	Tom Phillips	Ben Witherington
Bill Dalgetty	Wayne Kirkland	Gregory Pierce	N. T. Wright
Jack Davis	Kent Kusel	Eric Pillmore	Walter Wright
Max de Pree	Dwight Lacey	Bill Pollard	Doug Wysockey-
William Diehl	Katherine Leary	Gordon Preece	Johnson
Phil Downer	Paul Lim	David Rae	Michael Zigarelli
Dennis Doyle	Timothy Liu	Darby Ray	
Al Erisman	Jan Long-Harris	David Rogers	

APPENDIX D. QUESTIONS RECEIVED IN RESPONSE TO THE CO-CHAIRS' INQUIRIES

The co-chairs' letters of inquiry asked the recipients to reply with the most important questions that they believed a theology of work should answer. About 600 questions were received in response. In addition, student assistant Megan Schell of the Mockler Center for Faith and Ethics in the Workplace of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary compiled a list of questions stated or implied in some of the leading faith-work integration books. From these two sources, the following list was distilled by sorting the questions into categories and combining similar questions. Based on these categories, we developed the list of 20 Key Topics the Project intends to pursue. During the development process we expect to use the emerging *Theology of Work* drafts to answer these questions, as one test of the Project's completeness and practicality.

Motivation & Purposeful Living

- Can (or should) Christians eliminate self interest in work?
- Does work carry in it the seeds of selfishness and atheism?
- How much time are we to spend in vocational work compared to other roles we play? Or...How do we determine how much time...
- How does the Christian emphasis on family relate to the many anti-family pressures of the business environment?
- Must Christians take a (or the) Sabbath off from work?
- What is God's role for leisure?
- What do I do now that I can't work?
- What does the Bible teach about retiring?
- What does the Bible say about money? Does God give people a choice between serving God and money?
- What does the Bible say about appropriate levels of compensation? Is it OK for CEOs (or athletes or entertainers...) to make a lot more money than other people? How does a business owner (or company) determine what is fair to pay employees? Is it OK to determine compensation based partly on merit? on need? on being single vs. married? etc.
- How much money is it OK to spend? Does an upscale lifestyle contribute to a broken relationship with the rest of the human race?
- Is personal monetary success a sign of God's favor/approval or one's behavior?

- How do we find contentment with our compensation by making prudent lifestyle decisions that maximize our impact for the cause of Christ.
- Is ambition positive, neutral, destructive, or fallen but redeemable? Does ambition interfere with Christian witness
- What is the difference between being called and being driven?
- How do you cultivate an attitude of servanthood that leaves matters of promotion and provision in the hands of God.
- How does a believer become aware of and resist the inducements of pride?
- Is holding a position that is officially described as being “at the top” inherently sinful?
- Should Christians (or Christian businesses) tithe? How much money should I give away? Does God want me to take a vow of poverty and give everything away?
- Will God punish me if I don't tithe?
- How do I balance my budget of needs and wants with the biblical command of giving?
- What is the meaning of success at work in God's eyes?
- How should we define "success" in terms that encompass all of life, not merely our career goals and accomplishments.
- How can we develop a work ethic that is free from a compulsion to achieve meaningless goals, accumulate symbolic trophies and a desire to please everyone. Does Scripture speak to the subject of balance?
- Does my work matter to God? Does God care about the things I produce in my job? Does God care about the relationships I have at work?
- Will anything I do make it into heaven? If so, what? If not, what is work's value? Why should I devote effort to work when it is all destined to perish anyway?
- Is it OK for Christians (or Christian businesses) to borrow money? To encourage others to borrow money? To lend money?
- What does the Bible have to say about appropriate interest rates for loans and credit?
- What does it mean to give God the glory for my work? What does it mean to honor God at work?
- What spiritual disciplines should I practice in my worklife. Does prayer make a difference in my worklife?
- Does a Christian layperson need to read the Bible every day?
- Will God answer my prayers if I ask Him which job I should take?
- Does God change circumstances when we pray?
- Will God answer my prayers if I ask Him which job I should take?
- Does God want me to involve Him in the routine workplace decisions I make?

Calling and Career

- How do I know what job God wants me to do? Does it matter what job I take?
- Is there only one right job for me? Does God have a plan for everyone's job?
- Does God care about the things I produce in my job?
- Is it possible to identify our true calling at work?
- How do I determine if my job is not pleasing to the Lord?
- What is the difference between career and vocation?

- Am I "called" to my job or do I choose my job?
- Is it OK for me to quit my job? What obligation do I owe my employer?
- Does a person's giftedness imply that they ought to pursue a job using those gifts primarily?
- How do my spiritual gifts fit into my vocation?
- How to identify and cultivate our talents, passions, and temperament in our work as a response to God's purpose for our lives.
- How can (or should) one have tangible pride/value in his work?. Where does a worker's dignity come from in day-to-day work?
- Why does it seem that Christians are less (or more) responsible workers than non-Christians?
- I work at McDonalds and it's totally boring and I hate it but I can't get any other job. Nobody else here works hard, so why should I?
- Should I feel guilty that I have a great job while some people in the same company have rotten jobs and hate their work?
- I feel like my work contributes nothing tangible to improving people's lives. Should I quit and go into ministry?
- Can Christians be bartenders (or professional sports cheerleaders or bankers or...) Are there some jobs Christians can't do? Are they the same for all Christians and/or circumstances?
- How much moral stake do employees have in the products that they help produce or distribute?
- To what degree does the goal of the company one is working for need to be in line with the Gospel?
- Are there some jobs/employers Christians shouldn't be part of? If so, which ones? What if you need the money and that's the best (or only) job available?
- I feel like a second class citizen because "ministry" is what counts.
- Are ministers and clergy more important than the businessman? Is there any hierarchy of kinds of work that are more or less pleasing to God?

Business Strategy and Products

- As a Christian CEO, does the Bible offer me insight into how to determine whether investors or customers are my primary concern?
- Can human beings add value to things God created?
- How can we strengthen our organizations' competitive advantage by providing products and services that contribute real value to society.
- My company makes the abortion pill. Should I resign?
- Is making or selling alcohol (or tobacco or gambling or weapons or ...) sinful?
- Is it unethical to market a product that isn't quite what it says it is?
- How does a Christian in business choose a product?

Leadership

- How should Christians handle conflict at work?
- As a Christian business owner, should my company make use of Matthew 18 as an employee disciplinary procedure (or as a conflict resolution procedure)?

- How can I design organizational structures and core processes that reflect a more realistic view of human nature.
- What do I do if I can't stand my coworkers?
- There are two men who have strong ties to the labor union who taunt me and cause me health problems. What do you think I should do?
- How can Christians lead in a way that manifests Christ's redemptive purpose in the world?
- Doesn't the Bible teach servant-hood not servant leadership?
- How much should leadership be a matter of control vs. a matter of empowerment?
- How can I create an enlightened organizational culture that reflects Biblical values without endorsing a secular, politically correct agenda.
- How does Scripture inform us as to what are the characteristics of an excellent leader in the workplace?
- How (or should) I encourage creativity in my organization? Does creativity come from God?
- What is the Biblical basis for excellence, initiative, ingenuity, and forward-looking attributes that are key to taking any work/career/vocation to the highest levels?
- Can the corporation be a moral community for the development of human character and behavior, excel at generating profits and simultaneously serve its' customers?

Integrity

- Can you be successful in business (or be a CEO) while being genuinely obedient to Christian values? If so, how can I get help handling apparent conflicts? What am I willing to lose for my faith integrating it at work? Respect, responsibility, wages, opportunities, my job, my future in my field?
- How can I succeed when my competitors are willing to engage in questionably ethical practices to get ahead?
- What is a person's individual responsibility when his or her moral power is curtailed by outside constraints?
- When confronted with differing business practices in international business, what should we do?
- In a position of authority, is it ethical to make a decision based on "lesser of two evils" criteria?
- Is it ever OK to lie (or shade the truth or exaggerate) in the course of your work? E.g., advertising, performance reports, press releases, to protect others?
- What should you do when there are unethical decisions being made?
- I refused to pay protection money once, and paid a terrible price. Is it sinful for a shop owner to pay protection money?
- I've had an affair with someone in our office and want to confess, but she's begging me to keep it quiet. What do I do?
- What obligation do I have if I know others are lying, cheating or doing other unethical things? What if the infractions are minor? What if the "victim" is distant, large, or impersonal, e.g. cheating on taxes, filing an unmerited unemployment claim?
- How responsible should we be for company resources?

- Our union wants us to work slower so there is little inventory during the upcoming strike. What should I do?
- How does a Christian manager know when to show mercy to a worker?
- How do I balance honesty and compassion when completing a performance evaluation for a worker who tries hard but isn't good at their job? Is there a way to honor God when dismissing a worker?
- Should my Christian supervisor force me to work longer hours that take me away from my family?
- How should Christians respond to unreasonable bosses (or employees)? Is it wrong to oust a bad boss (or employee)?
- How can I minimize the hurt my biases do to others in the workplace?
- Is it OK for bosses and subordinates to have a spiritual relationship (e.g., pray together, go to church together, one lead the other to Christ, etc.)
- Should supervisors lead Bible studies in their departments?
- Should managers date employees?
- How to handle situations in which people believe they will have better prospects for advancement if they accept the Gospel (or evangelize) at work?
- How should Christians respond to unreasonable (or deadbeat) customers?
- Is it acceptable for Christians to give preferred treatment to vendors and suppliers who are also Christian?
- Should Christians try to buy (or hire) preferentially from other Christians?
- Can I charge Christians the competitive price in my field without guilt?
- Should Christians be in business partnerships with non-Christians?
- How can a woman speak up when there is discrimination and not ruin her job, work environment, and reputation? How should Christians handle this type of situation both peers and employers?
- What should we do about double standards with women and men.
- How do I handle/approach the tension of men getting better jobs/raises than their female counterparts who do just as good of work or better? What is the response as a Christian especially in a field that requires or sees better results using men rather than women?
- Is it proper to prevent women (or men) from taking jobs that would be in conflict with their duties to their families?
- In order to have privacy during discussions in my office, it's necessary to close my door. Is it appropriate for me to close my door when meeting with a worker of the opposite sex?
- Should men and women travel together for business?
- Is it proper to prevent women (or men) from taking jobs that would expose men (or women) to inordinate temptation?
- My assistant's manner of dress causes me to lust. Can I ask her to dress differently?
- Should Christian co-workers date?

Ethics

- How can I balance the tension between love and competition?

- Is it OK to compete with others in the workplace? Is it OK to compete with other Christians?
- How does a religious ethic based on love and service fit into a business ethic of competition and opportunism?
- Should Christian business owners boycott suppliers and vendors who support unbiblical practices?
- How come non-Christians sometimes have better ethical practices than Christians?
- Does the Christian faith have different workplace ethics than other faiths or people of no faith?
- Are Christians more ethical than non-Christians?
- What should set a Christian at work apart from his or her non-Christian counterpart? Is it that he or she reads their Bible at lunch or that they act with integrity in all areas of the workplace?
- Why are my Christian coworkers such hypocrites?
- Is it OK for Christians to sue other Christians in a court of law? To sue non-Christians? To sue companies, organizations, or the government? To defend themselves in a lawsuit?
- What is an "honest wage"?
- Is it acceptable in God's eyes for me to pay minimum wage to my entry level employees?
- How should I make hard choices about salaries and benefits in the face of performance expectations from shareholders?
- What are the 'rights' of a worker in God's eyes?
- How should I deal with underperforming businesses?
- Should a Christian company use a rotating group of temporary workers in order to avoid paying benefits?
- Is employment-at-will consistent with Biblical teaching?
- In our firm, where the owners make a big deal about being Christians, the low sales person each year loses their job. Is this right?
- I can hire cheaper workers overseas. What is my spiritual duty to my present workers?
- What is the ethical choice with immigrants, both child and adult?
- Should my Christian supervisor force me to work longer hours that take me away from my family?
- Does a company (or a Christian leader) have to pay for health benefits for employees?
- Is it OK for a company to lay people off? If so, under what circumstances, and what obligations does the company have to people laid off?
- Is it wrong to denigrate a competitor's product or service in sales pitches about our company's products?

Society

- Is there any room for benevolence in the marketplace?
- What does the Bible say about our duty to the poor?
- What responsibility does a business have to the society it serves?
- Shouldn't businesses only exist to serve society's needs?

- Shouldn't businesses only exist to serve society's needs and not its wants?
- Is there a just limit to profit seeking?
- Is the market economy what God wants for our economic system?
- Are labor unions OK with God?
- Is the Protestant faith good for business?
- What is the best thing the Christian faith could contribute to the business system as we know it today?
- Is there a national mission for Christians to provide meaningful jobs where none exist or where closures have occurred?

Shaping the Culture

- Is it possible to have a Christian company or what is a Christian company?
- How much responsibility should a Christian employer accept for an employee's spiritual development?
- How do we establish a code of ethics for the workplace that can be fully supported by Scripture and can stand the test of time?
- Can Christian beliefs be "secularized" for a corporation?
- Should I try to steer my company away from practices that involve, condone or support things I think are incompatible with what the Christian faith teaches, e.g., abortion, gay sex, globalization, pollution, greed, dishonest communication, oppression of minorities....? If so how and under what circumstances?

Working in a Secular World

- If you owned a company and employees started sharing their religion (Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, etc.) with others how would you respond?
- Should companies allow their employees to pray at the beginning of meetings?
- Should companies allow their employees to pray during their break?
- My company won't let me put up a calendar in my cubicle because it has Bible verses on it. Is that legal?
- Are Christians completely hypocritical?
- Can I be fired for sharing my faith on the job?
- How can I tell my coworkers I'm uncomfortable with their crude jokes?
- Is it appropriate for me to ask coworkers to stop using God's name in vain?
- Do I have to evangelize at work for God to be satisfied with me?
- Is my workplace more important as a place to evangelize than as a place to earn money?
- Should I talk about God in the office? How do I talk about God in the office?
- How can I talk to people about God who have everything going for them?
- There is a Christian in our company that evangelizes obnoxiously, and is giving the rest of us a bad name. What should I do?
- Are there ways to evangelize appropriately on the job?
- What is the way of the Christian in evangelizing without words, i.e., Francis of Assisi?
- Can I hire a Christian chaplain for my coworkers?

God/Theology/Bible

- Why did God create work?
- How does the authority of Christ and the authority of my employer work together?
- How was work affected by the Fall?
- Isn't work supposed to be hard and stressful according to the Bible?
- Does God promise health and wealth?
- On the day of Christ's return, what will count?
- Is work significant eternally?
- What effect does each eschatological view have on our view of work?
- What will heaven look like with respect to work and work products?
- What does the Bible say about rewards and what gets rewarded eternally?
- In light of Jesus' statement that His kingdom is not of this world, how does work contribute to the Kingdom of God?
- What are the 'rights' of a worker in God's eyes?
- What aspects of our current work will follow us into eternity?
- Does God care about the things that are temporal like he does the eternal? For example, does he care that I manufacture tin foil, or does he look at it and say "it's all gonna burn"?
- Why does God let bad people prosper in the marketplace?
- How could God let my coworker shoot me?
- Why won't God end my unemployment?
- Where is God in the middle of this crisis?
- Is God concerned with not only my spiritual needs by my physical and social needs too?
- My boss makes fun of Christians. What should I do?
- Does God promise us peace in our jobs if our faith is right?
- Does God promise success if I obey Him?
- Does the Bible promise prosperity to faithful Christians?
- Will God take care of my financial needs if I tithe?
- I know I'm supposed to trust God and not be anxious, but can I be sure God will meet my job needs?

Church

- Why doesn't the Church teach us more about the workplace?
- What responsibilities does the church have to support people who work?
- How can we discuss our workplace conflicts in a church setting?
- How can we give each other (Christians at work) the support and counsel we need to be faithful disciples in our daily work?
- How do I make sense of the fact that some people tell me work is a curse, and others say it is a blessing — how can they both be right?
- Is it OK to conduct business, look for a job, make a sale, etc. at church or in other church-related settings?
- What kind of help should I expect my church to give me in following Jesus in my work?

- What should I do if I believe a member of my church (or a Christian in general) is conducting their work life in an un-Christian manner?
- How can someone who makes a profit not worry that it will be perceived by the church as hoarding, greed, excessive, etc.?
- How can a Christian in the workplace use their gifts other than their “job’s gifts” to serve the Church?

Family

- Can a Christian be a CEO and still fulfill all the requirements of a spouse, parent, and church member?
- If a job requires a parent/spouse to work onerous overtime, should the Christian consider changing jobs?
- Should the employee of working parents/spouses have the duty to cut her employee some slack even if the employee is non-Christian?
- Does God approve of day care where parents have a choice?
- Should women with small children (or children under 18) work?

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Key works by Steering Committee members, annotated

Bakke, Raymond, William Hendricks, and Brad Smith. *Joy at Work Bible Study Companion*. Seattle: PVG, 2005.

Published as a companion to the book *Joy at Work* by Dennis Bakke, the *Bible Study Companion* is essentially a commentary applying the Bible in detail to a specific company. In many ways, this book is an example of the kind of applied writing that the Project hopes to inspire and that the *Theology of Work* is meant to make possible. Of course Bakke, Hendricks and Smith wrote it without the foundational theological support the *Theology of Work* is meant to offer. To do this they had to conduct their own fundamental research, although necessarily limited in scope. Therefore in some ways this book can serve as a prototype for the Project's researcher/writers. It's clear, readable style is also exemplary.

Cosden, Darrell. *A Theology of Work: Work and the New Creation*. Carlisle, Cumbria, UK: Paternoster Press, 2004.

The crucial systematic study of the nature of work in Christian perspective. Cosden is among the few writers in the faith-work field to base his work on a full-strength systematic theology, in this case Jürgen Moltmann's theological anthropology. Cosden derives the instrumental, relational and ontological aspects of work, and demonstrates that work has eternal value. His perspective thoroughly underlies the theological analysis undertaken in this paper. He also offers excellent discussions of the contributions of John Paul II's *Laborem Exercens* and Miroslav Volf's *Work in the Spirit*.

———. *The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006.
A popular-level expansion and application of the perspectives developed in Cosden's *Theology of Work*. Here he further develops the ontological aspect of work by showing the eternal value of work in both biblical and practical terms. Non-theologians will appreciate the biblical arguments and illustrations Cosden makes, which do not require an understanding of academic theology. Cosden unwaveringly argues that ordinary work has as much to do with the cross, resurrection, and second coming of Jesus, as does church work.

Kilgore, Randy. *30 Moments Christians Face in the Workplace*, 3 vols. Boston: Marketplace Network, 2001.

A lay-oriented Bible study, most notable here for its rich collection of scriptural passages related to work. The 30 moments referred to in the title are in a sense forerunners of the Key Topics of the Project. In each Moment, Kilgore brings to bear a wealth of Scripture passages, along with a synthesis applying them to the topic at hand. Together, the 30 Moments add up to a preliminary pass at the

scriptural research required for the *Theology of Work*, although organized differently from the Project's approaches.

Sherman, Doug, and William Hendricks. *Your Work Matters to God*. Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1987.

Although published 20 years ago, *Your Work Matters to God* remains the standard starting point for newcomers to the field of faith-work integration. Its accessible style, combined with a sensitive biblical application to the contemporary workplace, makes it appealing to workplace Christians. By organizing the book into chapters on the most common issues Christians face in the workplace, Sherman and Hendricks make it imminently practical. It is one of the few books in the field that is genuinely edifying on its own, without requiring interpretation by group leader or individual mentor.

Other key works, annotated

Agrell, Göran. *Work, Toil and Sustenance: An Examination of the View of Work in the New Testament, Taking Into Consideration Views Found in Old Testament, Intertestamental and Early Rabbinic Writings*. Translated by Stephen Westerholm. Stockholm: Verbum, 1976.

One of the earlier attempts at a theology of work. Based on his reading of Genesis 1-3, Agrell's theology of work consists of three topics: work as service to God, work as provision of sustenance, and work as toil/suffering. He briefly surveys some Old Testament, apocryphal, pseudepigraphical, and early rabbinic passages to see how they might bear on these topics. In doing so he provides a brief, but thoughtful catalog of work-related passages. He then surveys New Testament texts, particularly the synoptic Gospels, for their perspectives on his three topics. He concludes that the various writings do not provide a unified perspective and that this diversity calls into question whether there can be such a thing as a biblical theology of work. However, Agrell hints at a productive way forward: if there is a unity among the various biblical materials related to work, it will be rooted in their concepts of creation and eschatology. This hint proves to be important to later writers: Cosden acknowledges applying this insight in his work, and Stevens also pays special attention to creation and eschatology.

Hardy, Lee. *The Fabric of This World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990.

A theological exploration of work from the perspective of classical Protestant theology, particularly the theology of calling. Hardy develops his theology of work with reference to Luther and Calvin, in a sense preparing the way for writers such as Volf and Cosden to engage more recent theologians. The book is an important reminder that the Bible is always read with an interpretive lens. The Project needs to anticipate the lenses that its audiences bring, and it needs to examine whether its own lenses are as clear as possible. Hardy's application of his

theology to some of the classic business writings and cases of the late 20th Century is a first step towards the kind of robust application methods we intend the Contextualized Processes approach to develop.

John Paul II. *Laborem Exercens (on Human Work): An Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II*. Translated by the Vatican. Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 1981.

A remarkably practical doctrine of work with a social perspective sorely lacking in most Protestant writings on the workplace. John Paul II begins with an astute analysis of Genesis that leads him both to appreciate the creative/instrumental value of work, and to be wary of work's potential to damage human relationships. He is acutely aware that work occurs within societal constructs that often threaten to reduce the *worker* to a mere instrument for the production of goods and services. He covers topics such as labor-capital relations, materialism, human rights, outsourcing, unemployment, wage equity and benefits, rural poverty, disability, and emigration, which have seldom been adequately addressed elsewhere. Finally, he calls for the church to become vitally involved in the work lives of its members. One of the first questions the Project's ad hoc committee had to address was, "Is there really a need for anything in the theology of work that hasn't already been provided by the Pope?" The answer was yes, but *Laborem Exercens* sets a high standard for the *Theology of Work* to meet or exceed.

Nash, Laura, and Scotty McLennan. *Church on Sunday, Work on Monday*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001.

Not a theology of work, but an attempt to define the terms under which a theology of work might find a place at the table in contemporary corporate decision making. Nash and McLennan rightly argue that corporations will not tolerate a religiously-motivated debate that causes acrimony in their governance, policy-making, and strategic functions. Therefore, a theology of work must unite rather than divide Christians within corporations, and it must offer something of recognizable value to non-Christians as well. In large part, their work underlies the Project's concern about whether a theology of work can find widespread acceptance among Christians from differing ecclesiastical traditions.

Richardson, Alan. *The Biblical Doctrine of Work*. London: SCM Press, 1952, 1963.

Another very early attempt at a biblical theology of work, developed originally as a preparation document for the 1954 Assembly of the World Council of Churches' Special Commission on "The Christian in his Vocation." The preface to the second edition notes the difficulty of finding doctrinal agreement among the many perspectives represented by the World Council of Churches. It suffers from an indiscriminate mixture of biblical and apocryphal sources and a curious reluctance to admit that Genesis 1 and 2 ascribe a creativity to humans that in any way compares to the work of the Creator. It also offers very little in the way of application to specific workplace concerns. Nonetheless, it offers a small, but

useful collection of biblical passages. More importantly, it is written with a working-class perspective that has largely disappeared from Protestant faith-work writings in recent years.

Stevens, R. Paul. *The Other Six Days*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999.

A thorough exploration of the kinds of work ascribed to God and to humans in the Bible. No one else brings to life the biblical portrayals of work as vividly as Stevens does. Like Cosden —preceding him, in fact — Stevens shows that the intrinsic value of work arises because work persists in the New Creation. In this book, Stevens' observations are couched within an argument about church life and mission, rather than directly addressing workplace life and mission. This can make it difficult to see how his concepts apply in the workplace. Nonetheless this is an excellent source of biblical material and a good example of how to think theologically about work.

———. *Doing God's Business*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006.

A state-of-the-art workplace theology. Here Stevens turns his wealth of insight about work into a direct workplace theology. (His previous books tend to address work indirectly, though deeply, as applied ecclesiology.) *Doing God's Business* is in many ways a Protestant parallel to *Laborem Exercens*, a well thought-out, coherent perspective on work and workers. Like Pope John Paul II, Stevens is especially interested in the social implications of workplace theology. Together, they remind us that the God intends work to benefit not just the Christian worker, but the whole world.

Volf, Miroslav. *Work in the Spirit*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1991.

A charismatic approach to the theology of work, with a keen societal interest. Volf deliberately begins by covering the same ground as Hardy, attempting to show that a charismatic perspective can broaden Lutheran and Reformed formulas that don't fit the contemporary workplace well. Whereas Calvin, and especially Luther, saw calling as a static, lifelong assignment to a particular job or profession, Volf argues that God may call people to different kinds of work at different times. He bases his argument on the evident fact that the Holy Spirit's gifts to a person may change over time. Like Hardy, John Paul II and, to a lesser extent, Stevens, Volf applies his theology primarily to societal issues, rather than to business decisions. This highlights the urgent, unmet need Christians have for help in answering the question, "How does the Christian faith help me decide what to do in this particular situation in my work?"

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